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Tragic Apollo in Fifth-Century Athens: Text and Contexts

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Statue of Apollo, Zeus' temple at Olympia, circa 460

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the presentation of Apollo in Greek tragedy. Apollo is chosen as a particularly important tragic god because of his uniquely high profile in extant plays, and because of the continuing critical debate over his characterisation.

Existing approaches to studying the god figure will be challenged. Traditionally these often found a 'negative' god but gave limited consideration to the fifth-century context and were often judgemental in terms of twentieth-century morality. Recent studies have been more nuanced and against a wider contextual base but have generally been limited to studying Apollo in a single play.

There will be new emphases in the questions asked, focusing on how the Apollo figures are created in the texts, how these figures are experienced by an Athenian audience, and how and why Apollo's presentation changes through the fifth century. The methodology is new in examining Apollo across all extant tragedies in which he has significant textual presence; also in showing how we can relate Apollo's tragic presentation to a wide range of aspects of the socio-cultural and religious contexts. The figure of Apollo is thus seen as being constructed within both the dynamics of tragedy and the social and religious contexts of Athens, bringing internal and external together in the experience of the spectators.

Apollo is found to have potential for certain kinds of problematic tragic treatment. His morality and effectiveness are questioned in the earliest extant plays, but representations of the god in tragedy continue to shift and develop through the fifth century, in the distinctive approaches of new tragedians, and in engagement with new aspects of the Athenian context. The approach in this thesis aims to add to our understanding of how Apollo, and religion, function in tragedy for the fifth-century Athenians for whom the plays were produced.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the presentation of a god in Greek tragedy. The focus is on Apollo who has been chosen as a god of particular importance because of two observations: (1) his uniquely high profile in extant tragedies as evidenced by the high number of his major roles,¹ the frequency of textual references to him and of his stage appearances relative to other gods;² (2) the fact that the god's presentation in tragedy continues to be much debated.³ This study of tragic Apollo contributes to this debate by asking new questions, taking a new methodological approach, and drawing on recent theories on tragedy.

¹ He plays a major role in the action and/or themes of the *Oresteia*, *Alc.*, *IT*, *Ion*, *Tro.*, *Andr.*, *Hec.*, Sophocles' and Euripides' *El.*, *OT* and *Or.*, with a number of references in *Sept.*, *Phoen.* and *OC*. *Ant.* is the only tragedy in which Apollo receives no mention.

² The number of references to Apollo in extant tragedies is second only to those to Zeus and almost three times as high as to those to the next most frequently cited god, Athena – in similar proportion across the three tragedians – which suggests that it is not just an accident of survival. The number of references are as follows: in Aeschylus – Zeus 175, Apollo 46, Athena 9, Artemis 3, Dionysus 1 and Aphrodite 0; in Sophocles – Zeus 103, Apollo 44, Athena 14, Artemis 7, Dionysus 2 and Aphrodite 1; in Euripides – Zeus 233, Apollo 177, Dionysus 54, Athena 52, Artemis 45 and Aphrodite 28. In extant tragedies Athena makes 7 stage appearances, Apollo makes 3, Hermes makes 2, and no other major god makes more than one. I include any reference that, in context, clearly signifies Apollo. This necessitated a manual search for references to Apollo, but *TLG* has also been used to search for various names/epithets of the god. On Apollo's high profile in tragedy see Kavoulaki (2009: 229), and Athanassaki (2009: 405) including her observation that Wilamowitz (1896: 246-56) and Defradas (1972) both trace Apollo's centrality in 5th-century literature to the 7th and 6th centuries.

³ Griffith (2009: 497) notes that Apollo's behaviour in Greek tragedy has long been a 'critical battle-ground.'

First, recent scholarly approaches to tragic Apollo will be reviewed. In the earlier twentieth century, scholars' views of the tragic god tended towards morally judgemental studies of his 'character'. Such views can be seen in the context of the pervasiveness of the Platonic concept of Apollo which received considerable impetus from Nietzsche and by which Apollo was generally characterised as the god of order and control, truth and morality, and the god most representative of the 'Hellenic Spirit'.⁴ The point was that tragic Apollo was often seen *not* to conform to this image.⁵ Some of these critical views of the god were influential in subsequent readings of the plays themselves. For example, Verrall's judgement that we cannot take the Apollo of *Ion* seriously, and his view of the Apollo of *Orestes* as 'absurd, unreal, meaningless, impossible', influenced future ironic readings of these texts.⁶

Through the middle of the twentieth century we see the development in scholarship on Apollo of the 'critical battle-ground' described by Griffith (n. 3), and views of the god's characterisation and meaning within the plays are extremely varied. Some commentators still see Apollo as a Hellenic ideal in plays where he has since been found to be more ambivalent.⁷ Others continue to find a negative Apollo and infer critical treatment of the

⁴ Nietzsche (1999). For Apollo and Delphi in Plato, see *Ap.* 20e-21b; *Resp.* 3.399e; 4.427b; 5.469a, 470a; *Leg.* 738b, 759c, 856e, 865b, 871d, *Epin.* 988a (noting authorship disputed); *Phd.* 58a-c, 85b.

⁵ For critical views of tragic Apollo's behaviour see Wilamowitz (1904: 42) on the *Oresteia*, Livingstone (1925: 121) and Croiset (1928: 100) on *Eum.*, Case (1902: 197) on Eur. *El.*

⁶ See Verrall on *Ion* (1895) and on *Or.* (1905: 257). See Verrall's influence in, for example, Vellacott (1975) and Willetts (1947, 1973).

⁷ For positive views of Apollo in *Eum.* see, for example, Lattimore (1953, Intro.: 30) and Kitto (2002: 87). Some commentators still do not find Apollo to be criticised in *Eum.* (Parker, 2009: 152).

god by the tragedian.⁸ There have also been some notable ‘defences’ of Apollo in roles in which other commentators have found him to be criticised.⁹

A new phase in scholarship on Apollo in literature in the late twentieth century, especially among Francophone scholars,¹⁰ questions earlier idealising views of the god. Wathelet relates the violent Apollo he finds in Homer to social circumstances of the Homeric age and the problem of the integration of young people into society;¹¹ the Iliadic Apollo is a particularly threatening god because he represents youth and the perceived threat of young uninitiated men on the edge of society. De Roguin places the fearsome, wolf-like Apollo she finds in some tragedies against the background of Apollo *Lykeios* in cult and in myths found in historical writings. This radical re-assessment of representations of Apollo reveals the importance of studying literary god figures against their contemporary social and cultural contexts.

Two important works of the late twentieth century, by Roberts and Bierl, also highlight the significance of Apollo cult for his tragic presentation, each positing one of the god’s cult roles – as oracular god and patron of ephebes respectively – as the key to his ambivalence

⁸ See Winnigton-Ingram (1933: 103) on the *Oresteia*, and Vermeule (1959: 4) on Euripides’ ‘campaign’ against Apollo. Meltzer (2006:146) finds some strong authorial criticism of both the god and his oracle in *Ion*.

⁹ Burnett (1962, 1971), in particular, finds a positive Apollo in Euripides.

¹⁰ Wathelet (1993), De Roguin (1999). It is also a feature of French scholarship on Apollo cult in which Detienne (1986, 1998) finds a god characterised by violence and associated with blood sacrifice.

¹¹ Wathelet describes a society ‘qui se sent menacée par la montée d’une classe de jeunes, trop nombreux et pour lesquels on ne trouve pas de places, ni ressources’. (1993: 75)

in the plays.¹² More recently, work on Apollo has tended to take a broader contextual base for discussion. Zacharia's examination of Apollo in *Ion*, for example,¹³ takes into consideration his portrayal in some other plays, the characterisation of other gods in tragedy, Apollo cult, and elements of the historical background. Zacharia also asks new questions – not why Euripides is so critical of Apollo but why the god is important and ambivalent in Euripides generally. Bowie comments on how the Delphic oracle in the *Oresteia* relates to contemporary themes – the privileging of Athens/democracy over Delphi/prophecy.¹⁴ Mitchell-Boyask is innovative in relating the importance of the Apollo/Cassandra relationship in *Agamemnon* to the whole trilogy.¹⁵

These most recent works have some methodological and/or thematic importance for this thesis, particularly Zacharia's wide contextual base for discussion and Bowie's demonstration of how Aeschylus relates tragic Apollo to fifth-century issues. These examples, however, show how work on Apollo has tended to be largely within the context of one play or trilogy. There also continues to be a tendency to concentrate on Apollo's oracular role in tragedy. Athanassaki (et al) is an important collection of recent views on Delphic Apollo in literature and cult,¹⁶ including several chapters on tragedy, but is of

¹² Roberts (1984, esp. 82-4) finds the god's ambiguity in tragedy to be largely due to his oracular role. Bierl (1994, esp. 85, 89) links the pattern of Apollo's 'negative behaviour' in tragedy with the marginality and liminality associated with his major function as the god of ephebic initiation.

¹³ Zacharia (2003: 103ff.).

¹⁴ Bowie (2009).

¹⁵ Mitchell-Boyask (2006).

¹⁶ Athanassaki, Martin, Miller eds (2009).

course largely concerned with the oracular god.¹⁷ Finally, Graf's recent work on Apollo provides invaluable information and analysis of the god in cult and myth but touches only briefly on drama.¹⁸

This thesis, as a broad study of Apollo throughout extant tragedy, to my knowledge, presents a new approach. The aim is to examine how Apollo figures are created in the texts and in performance. I use 'performance' in the sense that the spectators experience tragic Apollo within the context of the dramatic festival as an event.¹⁹ This will be expanded to show how tragedians engage with different aspects of the Athenian religious, cultural and socio-political contexts in their representations of Apollo. The focus throughout is on the god's meaning for spectators of tragedy, and on reasons for changes in his presentation through the fifth century. The four sections following will (1) outline how and why particular methods, sources and theories are used; (2) look in more detail at how the study of Apollo in text and performance will be approached; (3) show how the relationship between the plays and the literary context will be examined; (4) discuss, similarly, the relationship between the plays and the religious, socio-political and intellectual contexts. This is followed by an outline of the subsequent arguments formed by this thesis about the meaning of tragic Apollo for fifth-century Athenians, and an outline of the chapter scheme.

¹⁷ Athanassaki (2009). See also in that volume, Kavoulaki (229-48).

¹⁸ Graf (2009).

¹⁹ On reconstructing performance from text see Taplin (1977, 1978) and Revermann (2006: 46ff.).

Methodology, sources and theory

Fifth-century audiences experienced tragedies within the context of religious festivals; this experience, therefore, can be considered as always, to some extent, a religious one. Tragedy, however, also engages with other socio-political and cultural aspects of the *polis* (insofar as these can be separated from religion).²⁰ This thesis will show how the representations of Apollo in the plays are part of this tragic dialogue with elements of the Athenian context.²¹ The spectators are seen as active participants in this dialogue as tragedy draws on their experience of extra-theatrical aspects of the god.²² The tragic Apollo figure is thus represented in terms of the shared experience and assumptions of tragedian and audience within the context of a dramatic performance. The result of this dialogue is an Apollo who is a dramatic construct – a figure with dramatic meaning specific to fifth-century Athens. It is recognised that one cannot reconstruct the whole of this meaning,²³ but a provisional assessment of the elements involved in the spectators' perceptions of Apollo in tragedy will be made.

²⁰ See Hall's idea (2006: 2) of a 'complicated dialectic' between the fictions on the Athenian stage and the spectators' world.

²¹ Two scholarly approaches to gods in tragedy, and to tragedy generally, which are of importance to this thesis are Mastronarde (2005: 321) who finds that gods have multiple roles in tragedy, as in myth and epic, and Wright (2008: 96) who considers tragedy too diverse to speak of 'the function of tragedy' as a whole.

²² See Bennett (1990, esp. 2-3 and 22) on the audience of Greek theatre as an active participant.

²³ Yatromanolakis (2007: 24) questions Jauss's approach to reconstructing original contexts, particularly his 'methodological overdeterminism, and his hermeneutic desire for a complete original meaning'.

The examination of Apollo in the tragic texts will be combined with discussion of his presentation in other literary genres,²⁴ and of representations of the god in historical, inscriptional and iconographical material. The choice of this material recognises that any reconstruction of the entire original context is impossible,²⁵ while an attempt to establish the significant aspects of this context – as long as it is recognised as selective – is still seen as the most valid approach.²⁶ The aspects of Apollo cult which are discussed are mostly those which receive explicit mention in the tragic texts, for which we have other evidence, and which we can assume would be part of everyday Athenian life. The selection of other contextual aspects is also based on certain assumptions about the spectators' knowledge and experience and recognises problems with these. For example, while we can assume the omnipresence of Homer at Athens, other poetry such as lyric would probably be less widely known (discussed further in Chapter 1).

This thesis does not take any one overall theoretical position but draws on several because of the different elements of text, performance and context involved in the discussion. For example, because we can see tragedies as 'adaptations' of myths and because later tragedies make considerable use of allusions to earlier ones, I draw on theories of

²⁴ See Revermann (2006: 47) who notes that it is the preserved scripts which will always be of central concern to performance analysis of ancient drama. This includes the question of the authenticity of texts, which Revermann discusses (66ff.).

²⁵ See Yatromanolakis (2007: 31) on the need to be aware of the subjectivity of the scholar as an active agent in the construction of cultural edifices.

²⁶ See Sourvinou-Inwood's questioning (2005: 295) of post-modernist claims that we cannot reconstruct ancient realities and that, therefore, attempts to do so have no validity.

‘adaptation’, particularly that of Hutcheon and the importance she gives to the new context in assessing the meaning of an adaptation of an earlier work.²⁷ We will see how various changes in the Athenian context of the later fifth century have significant consequences for the meaning of tragic Apollo.

Theories of intertextuality are also important here because tragedy accesses manifestations of Apollo in other literary genres, and later tragedians, through allusions and echoes, manipulate audience knowledge of earlier tragic versions of the god.²⁸

As the approach is centred on the spectators’ perceptions, audience studies and theories are drawn on, particularly those which see the audience as active participants.²⁹ The spectators bring their thoughts and preconceptions of Apollo to the theatre and these inform their experience of the god in the plays.

Finally, theories regarding Athenian topography and uses of cultural space are also applied. This is because spectators of tragedy experience Apollo within a unique cultural space. In particular in this thesis, some reference is made to the siting of Apollo cults, specifically to their proximity in relation to the theatre, and the significance of this for the spectators’ awareness and understanding of explicit references to these cults.³⁰

²⁷ See Hutcheon (2006) on ‘adaptations’, although her discussion is not specifically related to drama.

²⁸ See Genette (1997), Hinds (1998), Edmunds (2001).

²⁹ See notably Bennett (1990), McConachie (2008).

³⁰ See, for example, Wiles (1997, 2000) and Rehm (2002).

Text and performance

The discussion will begin with close examination of the tragic texts in order to assess the god's roles within the plays. Extracts will be discussed and textual problems noted, especially where they are relevant to the interpretation of Apollo's presentation. Scholia will also be quoted and considered, although they will not necessarily be treated as authoritative. A particular focus throughout will be on the techniques of the tragedians in creating the god figures. These can be divided broadly into three types: (1) the dramatic role of Apollo – how he functions in the dramatic structure and themes of the play; (2) the god's textual presence – his language, addresses to or descriptions of him by other characters, and how he is presented in lyric passages; (3) evocation of his cult roles; discussion of this is not necessarily based on textual evidence but makes certain assumptions, for example, that Apollo's relationship with Orestes would evoke his ephebic role in cult. There will also be a comparison with the treatment of other gods, and this will give particular importance to Athena.³¹ This is seen as a 'structuralist' pairing in the sense that Apollo in tragedy is partly defined by the difference in his status from that of Athena. This relationship seems, in tragedy at least, to have had more resonance for fifth-century Athenians than an Apollo/Dionysus contrast which has largely been constructed in retrospect.³²

³¹ Mastronarde (2002) has been an influence here in placing Apollo in Euripides in the context of his treatment of gods generally.

³² See Graf (2009) who highlights the importance of the Apollo/Athena relationship in Homer (11) and underplays the significance of the Apollo/Dionysus polarity in antiquity generally. The Apollo/Dionysus relationship does have some significance in *Ion* and this will be discussed.

It will also be important to consider the particular dynamics involved in the spectators' experience of Apollo within a dramatic event, as opposed to experience of the god figure in the reading of a text.³³ We are very limited in our knowledge of all aspects of staging, and any conclusions drawn will be fairly tentative. One example discussed is how the audience would interpret Apollo's 'sudden' appearance and unremarked departure in *Eumenides*, the question being whether spectators would infer meaning from this apparent breaking of stage conventions.

Another important aspect related to the audience's experience of Apollo within a dramatic event is the tragic use of choral lyric and monody to describe or address Apollo, and how this would be more prominent in the context of a performance than in the reading of a text. These lyric passages are a feature of what I will call Euripides' lighter tragedies; this is a term used not to suggest any lack of seriousness but to describe three plays (*Alcestis*, *IT*, *Ion*) which have a lighter tone than the other Euripidean works discussed here (The Trojan plays, *Electra*, *Orestes*). The lyric passages in these plays contribute to creating this lighter tone, as do their 'positive' themes of escape, redemption and resolution, their comic elements and their 'happy' endings. Examination of Apollo in these lighter plays reveals some marked differences in his presentation, and the lyric passages are a significant aspect of this; they tend to offer a benevolent portrayal of Apollo which stands in marked contrast to the impression of him created by the frequent vilification of him by the characters.

In a similar differentiation between the experience of a text and a performance, it will also be argued that brief textual references to Apollo's Athenian cults would have more

³³ See Bennett (1990, Chapter 3) relating reader response theory to audience and performance.

significance for a contemporary audience, familiar with these from their own experience, than for a modern reader of the text; included in this will be demonstration of the importance for the spectators' experience of dramatic Apollo of the proximity of one of his cult sites to the theatre.

Finally, on the approach to text and performance, intertextual and interdramatic relationships among tragedies will be discussed; this will take into consideration the degree of the spectators' knowledge of other texts and their awareness of these during a performance. I look at the significance for spectators' experiences of Apollo in the later plays of references made to earlier tragic manifestations of the god.³⁴ For example, in Euripides' versions of the Orestes myth, his close reference to the Apollo of the *Oresteia* functions to mark the differences in his own conceptual and thematic uses of the god. The question of audience recognition of such allusions is, therefore, important in our assessment of their perception of Euripides' Apollo figures in the plays.³⁵

The literary, religious, socio-political and intellectual contexts

These different aspects of the Athenian context, and tragedy's relationship with them, will be discussed in Chapter 1. The way in which the material and this relationship will be approached are outlined below.

³⁴ See Revermann (2006b), although discussing comedy, on the increase in audience competence in the later 5th century.

³⁵ Zeitlin (1980: 53), for example, found *Orestes* was perhaps the first play where 'close sustained familiarity with other texts is imperative for any genuine appreciation of its meaning and achievement.'

Apollo in literature

An examination of Apollo in other literature is important for discussion of his presentation in tragedy because tragedians make substantial use of other texts in his presentation. First, it must be acknowledged that the unknown numbers of lost texts means that our knowledge of literary Apollo is limited. Chapter 1 will discuss the extant texts which are judged to have the most importance for the god in tragedy. The selection of these is also based on assessment of their familiarity among Athenian audiences. The particular focus will be on the various manifestations of Apollo found in different genres and how they are absorbed and adapted by tragedy. The chapters on the plays will discuss the significance for the audience of intertextual allusions or associations – what ‘works’ in performance and what difference the recognition of a source makes to their perception of tragic Apollo.

Apollo in Athenian cult

Discussion of the relationship between Apollo in tragedy and in cult is limited by the dearth of evidence for fifth-century cult, but there are extant sources – largely in historical literature, in inscriptions, and in references to cults in other poetry. One useful, if problematic,³⁶ source here will be iconographical evidence, particularly depictions of Apollo on vases.

It is important to consider Apollo in cult for an understanding of the meaning of the tragic god for his fifth-century audience. Experience of cult and tragic gods takes place in

³⁶ See Yatromanolakis (2007: 47-48) on how ancient sources such as vases should be approached as nexuses of cultural meanings engaged in a continuous dialogue with other synchronic material and potentially subject to change and semantic inflections. See Carpenter on vases as the best source for myth and legend (1991: 9), and Taplin (2007) for the relationships among vases, myths and plays.

different cultural contexts but this does not mean that they are entirely separate entities; indeed, there is a complex relationship between cult and tragic gods and one about which we cannot be certain.³⁷ This thesis does not, then, unlike Mikalson,³⁸ approach tragic gods as literary constructs which are completely different entities from the gods of cult. I argue that the audience would not experience these as discrete aspects but would make connections.³⁹ Tragedians, in fact, make references to various Athenian Apollo cults, the associations of which would colour the spectators' experience of the god in tragedy.

I will also modify here the traditional tendency to distinguish benevolent cult gods from unpleasant and vengeful tragic gods.⁴⁰ Tragic references to Apollo cults, in fact, can often be seen to draw on their inherent ambivalences and on their suggestions of a dark side to the god – the wolf-like and fearsome Apollo *Lykeios*, for example.

Sourvinou-Inwood has shown us the importance of religion in the audience's experience of tragedy. However, I would perhaps not go so far as to agree with her comment that 'fifth-

³⁷ See Wright (2005: 347) on the difficulty of ascertaining the relationship between literary and cult gods. See a similar conclusion in Mastronarde (2002: 2, 7-9) on Euripidean gods.

³⁸ Mikalson (1991).

³⁹ See Sourvinou-Inwood's questioning (1997: 163ff.) of Mikalson's approach. Mastronarde (2002: 9) finds the god on stage is 'mysteriously both the same and not the same as the god you worship in a completely different local context.'

⁴⁰ See Parker (1997: 143-60) although this is only a 'point of departure' for his discussion. Feeney (1991: 45) also stresses the importance of the context in which gods are encountered. For a contrasting view see Wright (2005: 349) who questions whether the rules of context or genre are more important than what literature and cult have in common.

century Athenian audiences perceived [tragedy's] divinities as representations of the 'real' divinities of cult.'⁴¹ My approach to the study of tragic Apollo stresses that Athenian audiences would see the tragic god in relation to his representation in epic and other literature as well as in relation to his cult roles.

Finally on cult, it will be important to the study of changes in tragic Apollo to examine developments in the god's cult status in the later fifth century, and to assess how tragedy responds to these.

The socio-political and intellectual contexts

All three tragedians, in their use of Apollo, engage with the socio-political and intellectual contexts, and their representations of the god reveal a response to changes in these contexts through the fifth century. Changes in the god figure are classified here as shifts, meaning a difference in the presentation of the god from one play to another, and developments, denoting here a presentation of the god in which the tragedian appears to build on an earlier presentation (Apollo in *Ion* in relation to his presentation in *IT* and *Alcestitis*, for example). Discussion of the socio-political context will include events specific to the god; the plague at Athens which began in 430, for example, will be considered in the light of Apollo's traditional role as the plague-sending god. Our access to the spectators' experience of the contemporary world is obviously limited but Thucydides is an important source here because major subjects of his text – certain events of the Peloponnesian War and the plague – have been seen to have considerable significance for tragic use of Apollo in Sophocles and Euripides. Allowing for Thucydides' own agenda, I still make the assumption that

⁴¹ Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 6).

overwhelming events such as the plague would be prominent in the experience of the spectators and I consider whether this is addressed by tragedians.

A reductively historical approach, one which sees political tensions between Athens and Delphi as the key to the ‘negative’ Apollo in tragedy, has rightly been questioned recently.⁴² We might consider, for example, perceptions of Delphic medising and whether Aeschylus engages with these in his creation of Apollo figures.⁴³ Evidence for a medising Delphi is, in fact, uncertain;⁴⁴ there is debate on Athenian perceptions of this and on the extent to which such perceptions continued after the wars.⁴⁵ Athenian responses to Delphic medising have been seen as the reason for the apparent loss of Delphic influence on major public decision-making in fifth-century Athens; however, there are other factors to which

⁴² See such a historical approach in Parke and Wormell (1956: 189, 192). A questioning of this approach is found, notably, in Bierl (1994: 84) and Zacharia (2003: 118).

⁴³ On Delphic medising see Parke and Wormell (1956: 165-79). On how the *Oresteia* promotes Athens over Delphi and Athenian procedures over Delphic, see Bowie (2009: 208-231, esp. 211-12).

⁴⁴ There seems to have been a new policy of Delphic submission to Persia in the second half of the sixth century, continuing through the Persian invasion. See Parke (1967: 97, 105, 120). See Hdt. 1.174; 6.18ff. and 77; 7.139-41, 148.

⁴⁵ Forrest (1982, *CAH*, 319) notes that, after the Persian wars, Delphi ceased to be an active power in Greek politics. Parke and Wormell (1956: 165-79) comment that it is difficult to ascertain Delphi’s position in the wars but note that Delphi survived the Persian invasion intact (171); although they find that on victory the ‘slur of Medism’ was forgotten (176). Bowden (2005: 27) finds no evidence that any individual or state in antiquity thought that Delphi was acting for the Persians. Roberts (1984: 83) reminds us that much of the evidence for tragedy’s hostility to Delphi is in tragedy itself.

this has been attributed.⁴⁶ In this thesis the idea that Athens/Delphi relations have any significant influence on the representation of Apollo in tragedy will be treated sceptically.

The intellectual context is also of importance, particularly to discussion of the later plays.

We can be more confident in drawing conclusions about relationships between tragic Apollo and developments in Athenian philosophy because we are dealing with general shifts in thought rather than specific events. Impetus is added to the high tragic profile of Apollo as Euripides and Sophocles both make the god a focus in their engagement with aspects of contemporary intellectual debate. They do this to different effect but both address the rationalist speculation, the questioning attitude to the divine, and a concern with human experience associated with the sophists (see further on changes in cult and other aspects of the Athenian context in the later fifth century below).

Tragic Apollo

Use of the methods, sources and theories outlined above enables an assessment of the meaning of tragic Apollo for the fifth-century audience, and of the relationship between shifts and developments in the god's dramatic representation and aspects of the changing Athenian context. Certain pervasive elements are found in tragic Apollo throughout extant

⁴⁶ Burkert (1985: 116) comments that belief in the oracle waned in the 5th century after the Persian wars because Delphi had failed to foresee the Greek victory and that 'political decisions were increasingly taken without reference to the oracle.' Parker (1985: 322ff.), Price (2000: 74) and Humphreys (2004: 51) see rather a democratic erosion of the influence of divination on political decision-making in Athens.

tragedy, but there are also considerable variations in his presentation which can be related to a number of factors.

To expand, gods in tragedy can be benevolent but they are far more frequently punitive.⁴⁷ This observation can be made of literature as early as Homer – Hera and Athena in the *Iliad*, for example – but it becomes a central feature of tragedy. Several plays treat the punishment of humans by gods as a major theme – Aphrodite in *Hippolytus*, Athena in *Trojan Women* and *Ajax*, Dionysus in *Bacchae*, Hera in *Heracles*. Gods occasionally punish other gods – Zeus in *Prometheus Bound*. Apollo does not have a major role in extant tragedy in which he explicitly takes vengeance, although there are some examples of him as a punishing god. In *Andromache* he is involved in the killing of a repentant Neoptolemus at Delphi. We see a punitive Apollo in Sophocles' *Niobe* (fr. 441-42 Lloyd-Jones) and a passage in Aeschylus (fr. 350 *TrGF*, quoted in Plato, *Republic* 2.383a-b) where he kills Achilles after apparently promising him a long and sickness-free life. In the trilogy which contains *Seven Against Thebes* he probably played an important role as a vengeful god (discussed in Chapter 2). We also hear, in *Agamemnon*, reports of his vengeful attack on the Greeks at Troy and of his treatment of Cassandra. The most characteristic presentation of Apollo, however, is as a god who is consistently questioned in his morality and/or his effectiveness, through all three tragedians, across different myths and in different types of play.

⁴⁷ Mastronarde (2005: 321): gods in tragedy can be beneficial or malevolent, punitive and destructive but the latter is preponderant. See also Burian (1997: 178-208, esp. 187ff.) on retribution, including that of gods on humans as punishment for past offences, as a typical pattern in tragedy.

Apollo's morality must be considered in the context of the behaviour of gods generally in literature. From Homer onwards, divine behaviour is often immoral by human standards and in tragedy this becomes a major theme. Apollo is frequently made the focus of moral questioning in certain ways. His morality is questioned by the presentation of his language and behaviour (both being often aggressive and threatening), and by references to, or evocations of, cults which carry associations of darkness or fearsomeness. It is questioned implicitly by sympathetic treatment of his 'victims' and, especially in Euripides, more directly, through questions raised and accusations made by other characters. Apollo is the target of the latter more often than any other god.

'Ineffectiveness' is an attribute of Apollo in several myths.⁴⁸ In tragedy too this becomes an important aspect; it is often expressed through a questioning of his abilities in his standard roles, such as prophecy and healing, and in problematisation of his traditional qualities – the god's distance from humans, in particular, is often treated as a failing. Apollo's ineffectiveness is a major means by which tragedy expresses human isolation and confusion in the face of the divine.

The widening of the focus to examine Apollo in other literature and in cult, which was outlined above, helps to explore why he receives this particular kind of tragic treatment. Apollo is not inherently more ambivalent than other gods but he has particularly wide potential for problematic treatment in tragedy. He is in fact predisposed to this because of aspects of his cult status at Athens and because of the nature of some of his previous literary manifestations, especially in Homer. Apollo is a god of somewhat marginal status

⁴⁸ See Felson (2009: 149). Kakridis (2009: 634ff.) comments on Apollo's failures as a lover.

generally at Athens, especially in comparison with Zeus and Athena. Comparison with these two gods is particularly significant because tragedy echoes the Homeric Olympian family model in which Zeus, Athena and Apollo are the most important deities. In Homer (as in other literature and in cult) Zeus is a special case and could be said to encompass all qualities, to operate at a higher level than other Olympian gods. Athena is on the Greek side in the *Iliad* while, of the chief Homeric triad of divinities, Apollo is ambivalent for Greeks as the champion of the Trojan enemy. Furthermore, in Athenian cult, Zeus and Athena have official roles as the chief city gods of Athens with centrally located cult sites. Apollo's peripheral cult sites and lack of importance as a civic god seem to be evidence of a somewhat marginal status in the city (these aspects are discussed in detail in Chapter 1).

From this I argue that, as tragedy as a genre and in practice in the community offers a framework well-adapted to the exploration of ambivalence,⁴⁹ Apollo's importance in tragedy and the high number of problematic treatments of him can, in fact, be related both to the nature of tragedy itself and to its production for an Athenian audience. Apollo could be said to have a higher profile in tragedy because, among the most important of Olympian gods, he has a lower profile at Athens; he has more potential for problematic treatment because he is less tied to a city whose values tragedy tends to promote.⁵⁰

The presentation of tragic Apollo continues to shift and develop through the works of successive tragedians, in response to socio-political and intellectual changes. Rationalistic

⁴⁹ See Vernant on Greek tragedy as an ambivalent genre (1990).

⁵⁰ See Kurke (1997), Griffin (1998), Rhodes (2003) and Seaford (2003) for variations on the view of the Athenian nature of tragedy.

scepticism of the later fifth century has traditionally been seen as particularly characteristic of Euripides,⁵¹ but Apollo becomes a focus for tragedy's involvement with new ideas in both Euripides and Sophocles; each uses the god to engage with these in different ways.⁵² We do not find a decline of belief in Apollo's oracles, either in Athenian society or in the plays.⁵³ We see rather, especially in Sophocles' *OT*,⁵⁴ the potential of the oracle for tragic engagement with new philosophical themes including questions of reality and appearances, divine truth and limited human knowledge, and of divine/human responsibility for actions and events.⁵⁵ We see a shift of focus onto human experience in tragedy, with significant

⁵¹ For examples of rationalistic scepticism, see Anaxagoras (c.500-428) and Empedocles (c.492-32) (followers of Parmenides) who visited Athens around 450 and developed systems of a comprehensive rational explanation of nature. See Burkert (1985: 306-7). The idea that Euripides was an atheist is now usually discounted. There is little evidence for the idea beyond that found in Aristophanes' comedies (especially *Thesm.*, produced in 411, where a character complains that Euripides has 'persuaded the men that gods don't exist' 480). See also Lefkowitz (1987: 152). Euripides does, however, engage with the ideas of the sophists in several tragedies. On this see, for example, Conacher (1998: 10).

⁵² See Goldhill (1986: 229) on sophists and tragedians as 'parallel investigators of the position of man in language and society.'

⁵³ The oracle remained a religious authority and infused in the social and religious life of Athenian people. See Bowden (2005, esp. 39, 159), Harrison (2006: 137) and Griffith (2009: 481-82).

⁵⁴ Parmenides and Empedocles (roughly contemporary with Sophocles) speculated about perception and reality. The deceptiveness of the senses and the concealment of ultimate reality beneath false appearances are dominant themes throughout the period in both philosophy and literature. Segal (2001: 10) notes that Oedipus shares this concern with finding truth in a world of appearances. Goldhill (1986: 199) comments that Oedipus is the representative of the new 5th-century man whose limits are revealed by his fate.

⁵⁵ Gorgias (c.485-c.380) 'dealt with the questions of causality and responsibility that lay at the heart of many tragedies, including *Oedipus*.' (Segal, 2001: 9).

consequences for the presentation of Apollo, in both Sophocles and Euripides.⁵⁶ In Euripides, particularly, Apollo becomes the focus for applying human morality to the gods and for the tragic emphasis on suffering, confusion and isolation in human relations with the divine world.

If tragedy in the new era of rationalism finds oracular Apollo to be an effective focus for questions about the divine world generally, new aspects of the socio-political context provide impetus to tragic portrayals of Apollo as an individual god. Thucydides is a source through which we can attempt to access aspects of Athenian experience, including that of Apollo-related events such as the plague at Athens from 430, and we will see how this may be addressed in Sophocles' *OT*. In Euripides, the influence on the characterisation of Apollo of Athens/Delphi relations, specifically perceptions of Delphi siding with Sparta in the Peloponnesian war, will be considered but, like medising, only as a possibility. We can be more confident in observing relationships between tragedy and broader changes in society. We will see how these are reflected in the marked differences between the Apollo figures found in two treatments of the Orestes myth in 458 and 408 – the *Oresteia* and *Orestes*.

As the best way of bringing out both changes and pervasive ideas in the god's tragic presentation through time, the plays are dealt with in roughly chronological order. The considerable time gap between the *Oresteia* and Euripides' latest plays enables examination

⁵⁶ A possible parallel to Protagoras (c.490-20), the best known of the sophists and particularly famous for his supposed statement that 'man is the measure of all the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not,'

of the significance for Apollo of changes in the wider context. To bring out the distinctive approaches of the tragedians, Apollo will be discussed separately in each. The fact that Euripides and Sophocles are contemporaries, and therefore working against the same socio-political and cultural background, highlights the differences in the nature of each individual tragedian's conceptual and thematic use of Apollo.

Chapter 1 discusses Apollo in other literary genres and in cult for two main reasons: (1) to discuss examples which reveal how and why, relative to other gods, Apollo has particularly high potential for tragic representation and for a certain kind of problematic treatment; (2) to discuss the literary and cultic material which is drawn on in the plays.

In the chapters on the plays, the methodology will shift as the nature of the material varies. The *Oresteia* is treated extensively through Chapters 2 to 4 in order to include detailed examination of Apollo cults. References to these are important in Aeschylus, and some of them will also be cited in later plays; detailed treatment is, therefore, necessary to establish their existence and nature. These plays are also discussed at length because the *Oresteia* offers the unique opportunity to study the development of a god figure through a trilogy, and also because it will be argued that a certain kind of tragic Apollo figure and its thematic use are inaugurated in Aeschylus.

Chapter 5 on Sophocles' *OT* and *Electra* focuses on how the changing intellectual context provides new potential for dramatic treatment of oracular Apollo as tragedy engages with contemporary ideas. Particularly characteristic of Sophocles is how these new ideas are juxtaposed with some of the darker aspects of Apollo found in the poetic tradition. As the

focus is on the characterisation of the oracular god, there will be some examination of oracles in other sources for comparison.

In Euripides, the greater number of extant plays provides the opportunity to examine the variety of treatments of Apollo within the work of one tragedian. Chapter 6 on *Alcestis* and *IT* and Chapter 7 on *Ion* show how Apollo functions in Euripides' lighter tragedies. In Chapter 8 we will see the continuing resonance of the Homeric Apollo in the later fifth century, and how we can relate a critically treated tragic Apollo to historical realities. Finally, Chapter 9 examines Euripides' two late, dark treatments of the Orestes myth. This will highlight again the significance of the type of play, and also of the changed context – comparing the conceptual and dramatic use of Apollo with the *Oresteia* of fifty years earlier. Euripides' presentation of Apollo is largely through the comments made by his characters, so more space will be given to discussion of these characters than in the chapters on the other two tragedians.

This study of Apollo through all three playwrights, examining the texts in detail and discussing their relationship with the contemporary world, makes a contribution to the continuing debate over Apollo's tragic representation, and to the role of religion in tragedy, by showing the many factors involved in the presentation of a god. Successive tragedians continue to draw on poetic tradition but tragic Apollo is also continually evolving in engagement with the Athenian context.

PART I

Chapter 1: Apollo at Athens in the fifth century

The Introduction noted the importance of studying both the Athenian literary and cult contexts of the god when examining tragic Apollo. This chapter, therefore, has two aims: (1) to show how the nature of both Apollo's cult status and of previous literary treatments underlies his importance in Athenian tragedy and embeds predisposition to certain kinds of problematic treatment in drama that is produced for a fifth-century Athenian audience; (2) to discuss aspects of Apollo in literature and Athenian cult with which tragedy actively engages, and knowledge of which informs the spectators' experience of the god figures in the plays.

Apollo in non-tragic literature

This section will discuss Apollo in Homer, the *Homeric Hymns* and choral lyric, especially Pindar's *paians*. These examples are chosen as the most significant for tragic Apollo. The aim is to show how, in different literary genres which have their own sets of norms and cultural functions, different aspects of Apollo are emphasised. In the presentation of Apollo figures, tragedy is selective in drawing on these other genres, recontextualising some of Apollo's previous roles and characteristics and subverting other literary forms in which he appears. In assessing the impact on spectators of an apparent allusion to, or echo of, Apollo in other literature, we must also note that there would be different levels of awareness of these among the tragic audience.

Apollo in Homer

Homer is omnipresent in fifth-century Athens and clearly important to tragedy generally. The *Iliad*, in particular, is the most important text for tragic Apollo; it will, therefore, be discussed here in some detail.¹ We find in tragedy both direct allusions to and echoes of Homeric aspects of Apollo. Several attributes of the god found in Homer – notably his characteristic ‘distance’ and his warrior-god persona – which are not necessarily problematic in an epic context, become so in fifth-century tragedy in what can be seen as a symptom of tragedy’s challenge to epic values. Another major aspect here is how Apollo’s presentation relative to Athena transfers from Homer to tragedy.

First, as an archer-god,² Apollo has long been associated with distance. In Homer there are many uses of Apolline epithets which mean ‘worker from afar’ or ‘shooter of arrows from a

¹ Most scholars see tragic gods as Homeric but there is little detailed discussion of how. See four recent works on religion/Apollo in tragedy: Mikalson (1991) acknowledges that all tragedians use the Homeric model of gods but does not describe what this is in any detail or analyse it in the context of 5th-century tragedy; Parker (1997) does not comment on the Homeric nature of gods in tragedy; Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) does not mention Homer in the section on the *Oresteia*; Roberts (1984: 73) finds that the roots of Apollo’s ambiguity are in the Homeric tradition, but is centrally concerned with how this ambiguity is deepened in tragedy by his oracular role.

² Rešep, the Semitic deity who, as a plague god, shot firebrands and was worshipped on Cyprus and in Ugarit, a civilisation of late Bronze age North Syria, is seen as the likely cult root of the plague-sending, archer-god aspect of Apollo (Burkert, 1985: 145). See also Graf (2009: 15).

distance'.³ He is also distant in the sense of having long absences from the action, notably in comparison with Athena.⁴ Homeric Apollo is also particularly detached from humans; he represents the distance between the divine and the human, and reminds humans of their place.⁵ From these probably develops the tradition of Apollo as the god who 'polices' the boundary between the divine and human realms. This aspect is not necessarily problematic here. Apollo's abrupt leaving of Hector, for example, could merely suggest the limitations of the gods generally in the face of fate – Zeus has weighed the golden scales and Hector must lose (22.208-13) – while withdrawal or absence at the point of death is a traditional feature of gods. In tragedy, Apollo's abrupt exit in *Eumenides*, for example, has often been taken to cast the god in a negative light (discussed in Chapter 4), and his absences in other plays at times when he might be expected to be present can suggest lack of communication, ineffectiveness, lack of control over events and, in the later fifth century, increasing irrelevance to human and social problems.

³ ἑκάεργος – *Il.* 1.479; 5.439; 9.564; 15.243, 253; 16.94, 706; 17.585; 21.461, 478; 22.220, *Od.* 8.323;

ἐκηβόλος – *Il.* 1.14, 21, 96, 110, 373, 438; 16.513; 22.302; 23.872; ἐκατηβόλος – *Il.* 1.370; 5.444; 15.231; 16.711; 17.333, *Od.* 8.339; 20.278. See the terms in Pind. *Pyth.* 8.61; *Pyth.* 9.28.

⁴ After Bk 1 his next active involvement is not until 5.344-46 when he saves the life of Aphrodite's son. He often retires to Pergamus to watch other gods take part in the action (4.507-16; 5.460-61; 7.20-21).

⁵ He finds Achilles' grief for Patroclus excessive (24.53-54), with which we could contrast Zeus weeping tears of blood over Sarpedon (16.458-61), reminds Achilles he is mortal (22.8-13), warns Diomedes not to aspire to be the equal of the gods (5.440-42), describes men as pitiful creatures who are not worth fighting for (21.461-67) (cf. *Eum.* 646-51). Cf. Michelakis (2002: 153), Graziosi and Haubold (2005: 128) on the relationship between Achilles' human arrogance and the antagonism between god and hero.

Athena in the *Iliad*, in contrast, constantly intervenes in the action, sometimes in disguise.⁶ Apollo also occasionally disguises himself to enter the action (20.81-82) and is also described like Athena as λαοσσόος – ‘rouser of men’ (20.79-80) – but nowhere near as often does he intervene and he does not go through the ranks. Again this is not a problematic aspect of the god in this context but, in tragedy, Athena will several times represent Apollo or appear in his stead (*Eumenides*, *Ion*, *IT*) in circumstances where the text seems to cast him in a disadvantageous light. A further comparison, significant for tragedy, is that Apollo and Athena are the two chief warriors of the *Iliad*.⁷ Apollo’s position is already unfavourable from a Greek point of view; he is on the Trojan side while Athena acts on behalf of the Greeks as part of Zeus’ grand plan for a Greek victory.⁸ Graf comments that she is ‘the hoplite’s goddess’ in Homer, already a warrior more easily adapted to *polis* values, while Apollo is the ambivalent ephebic archer.⁹ In tragedy the context magnifies the significance of this contrast; in the *Oresteia* Apollo’s warlike elements become anachronistic while Athena is the supreme goddess of the fifth-century *polis*.

⁶ See *Il.* 1.197-98; 2.166ff., 280, 450ff.; 4.78-79, 439; 5.792ff. Although, note Athena’s occasional Olympian distance from her own hero, Odysseus (*Od.* 22.236-40).

⁷ Graf (2009: 14) notes that Apollo’s archery is the ‘deadly art of the warrior.’ In the *Od.* the archer-god aspect of Apollo predominates. See *Od.* 3.280; 15.411; 22.7. Odysseus’ return is forecasted to be at the time of the festival of λυκάβας (14.160-62; 19.305-7) which seems to have been a festival of the new moon, sacred to Apollo as *Noumenos* (Hes. *Op.* 770) (see *LfrgE* λυκάβας). See warrior-like descriptions/activities of Athena at *Il.* 2.450ff., 4.77-78 and 439, 5.330-33 and 426-29, 5.733ff., 8.381ff., 6.269 and 279, 15.213. See Pope (1960: 113).

⁸ See Allan (2006: 20-21).

⁹ Graf (2009: 15).

Related to Apollo's warrior role are these aspects which will be discussed below: he is the killer of Achilles; god of ephebes; champion of Troy; supporter of an individual.¹⁰ Apollo's responsibility (along with Paris) for the death of Achilles is only foreshadowed in the *Iliad* (21.278-79) but it is the major theme of the *Aethiopis*, and it is likely that the fifth-century audience would have experienced Homer within the context of other epic.¹¹ There is a complex relationship between Apollo and Achilles in Homer and in tragedy.¹² In Homer, Apollo is not as problematic a god as Achilles is a hero, but both will be in tragedy and especially in Euripides. For example, the representation of Apollo in *Andromache* has been seen as particularly negative, partly because of the number of references to the god as killer of Achilles.¹³ In *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*, however, Achilles is also treated unfavourably to some extent. Apollo in his epic persona is, like Achilles,¹⁴ presented at times as a figure

¹⁰ God of the oracle is not a significant role for Apollo in Homer. Delphi is mentioned, as *Pytho*, only twice in the *Il.* (2.519 and 9.405), and twice in the *Od.* (8.79-80 and 11.581). Apollo was associated with Delphi from at least the mid 8th century; see Forrest (1957: 171-73), Hedrick (1988: 202), Graf (2009: 57ff.). If the *Il.*, as is sometimes argued, does not reach its final form until the 7th or even the 6th century, it is notable that Apollo as god of Delphi is not a more important feature, especially as Achilles' remark at 9.404ff. suggests a sanctuary well-established and proverbially rich, but Apollo's role as prophet is merely mentioned (*Il.* 1.72 and *Od.* 8.79-80). This is not to say that prophecy itself is not important in Homer. The *Il.* and *Od.* each have important prophets who act as channels to Apollo – Calchas and Theoclymenus respectively.

¹¹ See *Aethiopis* fr.1 (West).

¹² See Michelakis (2002: 153), Nagy (1979: 61-62, 143-44), Graziosi and Haubold (2005: 128), (Rabel, 1990: 429-30). Burkert (1975: 19) calls Achilles 'fast ein Doppelgänger' of Apollo. I note similarities between god and hero in some details: Achilles even plays the lyre (9.186) and Apollo is ἀκερσεκόμης (20.39) which is reflected in the hair-shearing of Achilles (23.141-43).

¹³ Roberts (1984: 79).

¹⁴ Michelakis (2002: 19).

of a problematised past. The god and hero are both in turn idealised and questioned; we cannot assume that it would be seen as an entirely unfavourable aspect of Apollo for fifth-century Greeks that he kills Achilles, but the two continue to have a complex relationship in Athenian culture.

Apollo is a young god in Homer;¹⁵ he has uncut hair – is ἄκερσεκόμης – in the *Iliad* (20.39). Graf finds him to be already ambivalent in the *Iliad* in his association with ephebes as he is also responsible for the sudden deaths of young men.¹⁶ Wathelet also finds Apollo to be ambivalent in terms of his youth. He is the redoubtable adolescent, irascible and lacking perseverance and, like the young men on the edge of society, potentially dangerous.¹⁷ In tragedy Apollo will be highly ambivalent in his role as mentor to ephebes, sharing their liminal status and, especially in his relationship with Orestes, the target of accusations of having made unjust commands, of ineffectiveness and desertion.

¹⁵ Apollo is not explicitly a mentor of ephebes in Homer (see Graf, 2009: 13); he is more so in Hesiod where it is said that Tethys' daughters, Apollo and the Rivers have youths in their keeping (*Theog.* 346-8). Although, Felson notes (2009: 157) that the *Od.* gives the earliest representation of Apollo in his function of a guide for youths (19.86-88).

¹⁶ Graf (2009: 13). See the Niobe passage (*Il.* 24.604-7) and Hecuba's comment that Hector looks 'like one whom Apollo killed softly with his silver arrows' (24.758). At *Od.* 17.251, the suitors wish that Apollo would kill Telemachus (whom Apollo protects).

¹⁷ Wathelet (1993: 72-75).

Homeric Apollo is also potentially culturally ambivalent for Greeks as the god on the Trojan side.¹⁸ It is not clear why he is for the Trojans; it could be because he was seen as a Lycian god (the Lycians being Troy's main allies in the poem).¹⁹ There are different views on this.²⁰ We do not know if fifth-century Athenians would have perceived Apollo as a Lycian god, or thought of Homeric Apollo as Lycian, or indeed how far they were aware of any cult origins. This is difficult to assess, both because of the lack of evidence and because of the difficulty in drawing conclusions about perceptions in societies generally.

¹⁸ Evidence that Apollo is on the Trojan side: 7.21, 272; 8.311; 11.353; 12.17-18; 15.326-27; 16.514-15, 527ff, 698-701, 715-24, 786 ff.; 17.118; 20.31ff., 79-80, 443-44; 21.277-78, 596ff.. Further evidence at 1.37ff., links Apollo as *Smintheus* with the Troad. Apollo's priest, Chryses (whose name is from the city of Chryse in the Troad), addresses him as Protector of Chryse and Ruler of Tenedos (an island off the coast of Troy) and at l. 39 as *Smintheus* a possible actual cult, certainly associated with the Troad. See Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 256), Kirk (1985-93 ad loc.), Graf (2009: 24-25). Historical evidence for the cult includes Strabo 13.1, 48 & 64 and 604-5 and Paus. 10.12.3. For archaeological evidence see Paus. (1971, trans. Levi, vol. 1: 437, n. 79).

¹⁹ Graf (2009: 11-12) notes that there is only one other story connecting Apollo and Troy – that of Apollo and Poseidon building its walls (or alternatively, Apollo tending the cattle) (*Il.* 7.452-53). Laomedon refused to pay them, threatened them and chased them away so Poseidon hates Trojans and is puzzled by Apollo's continuing support for them (21.440ff.).

²⁰ Heraclitus (*Allegories* 7.10) said that Homer's Apollo could not be born in Lycia as it was a myth unknown to him. See Burkert (1985: 144), Mellink (1995: 33-35), Bryce (1991: 144-45), Marcinkowski (2002: 8), Graf (2009: 12), Gershenson (1991: 14), Brown (2004). Kearns (2004: 61).

There are possible explanations other than Lycian cult origins for Apollo's support of the Trojans in the *Iliad*. Wathelet argues that it is because he is a dangerous god;²¹ Graf's explanation is that the god responsible for the sudden deaths of young men 'is the fitting god for the side that eventually will lose the war.'²² We could add that the presentation of Apollo as the divine supporter of the Trojan side may also be driven by narrative reasons – the necessity in the story to have gods lined up fairly evenly on each side.²³ However, if Apollo was perceived as Lycian this might have added to Athenian perceptions of him as a somewhat alien god.

One aspect of Apollo's Lycian connection which is particularly important for tragedy is the meaning for fifth-century Athenians of the epithet *lykēgenēs*. It is found twice in the *Iliad*, as 'Ἀπόλλωνι Λυκηγενεῖ (4.101, 119), where Athena persuades Pandarus to break the truce and to pray to Apollo, and can be translated as 'Lycian-born' but also as 'born of the wolf' or 'born of light'.²⁴ It could be a reference to Pandarus' home – the local Lycia. Also, Pandarus' father is Lykaon – Λυκάονος υἱόν (4.89) – which again could be connected to

²¹ Wathelet (1993: 60ff.) argues that Apollo is on the side of Troy in Homer because he is dangerous, representing the perceived threat of young uninitiated men on the edge of society.

²² Graf (2009: 14).

²³ Each side has a major god, Apollo and Athena, the two chief deities after Zeus and often invoked along with him as a triad of gods in Homer. One major god on each side champions the main hero (see, for example, 22.216-18). See also the games for Patroclus (23.383). Note Nagy's analysis of them as 'ritual antagonists' (1979: 144-45). See Graf (2009: 11) on their antagonism as a major theme in the *Il*.

²⁴ *LfrgE* comments that Λυκηγενής probably means 'Lycian-born' but that other possibilities existed in antiquity. *Lyk-* is likely to have come from *Lukk-* which can be a place name and/or mean light in Anatolian languages (as it does in Hittite). Translations still vary among translators and commentators.

‘wolf’, ‘light’ or the name ‘Lycia’.²⁵ In context, where Athena tells Pandarus to call on Apollo to aid an attack, the translation as ‘wolf’ carries particular conviction in suggesting that Apollo has wolf-like aspects.²⁶

The dynamics here seem to be carried through to tragedy. Apollo is frequently cited as *Lykeios* in dramatic contexts where ‘wolf-like’ seems to be the main suggestion. De Roguin’s argument that the *lyk-* prefixed words in tragedy carry the meaning of ‘wolf’ is usually convincing because wolf-like personality traits are often appropriate within their narrative context.²⁷ However, we should still consider other suggestions of the word. The ‘wolf’ and ‘light’ meanings appear to be etymologically related,²⁸ and Apollo is also associated with light as ‘Phoebus’ which is his most common epithet in Homer (and of course the word might carry the suggestion of ‘Lycian’ if Apollo were perceived as such). Ancient Greeks would probably have understood the word in varied ways, and would be likely to have interpreted it according to the context.

Apollo, although distant from humans generally, does act as a supporter of individuals in Homer and this seems to be presented as a ‘positive’ feature. I do not find that Apollo functions to represent moral values, nor do I observe any kind of moral development in the

²⁵ *LfrgE* under *Λυκάων* notes, from Hes. fr. 163, that *Ἄρκας*, son of Zeus was killed by Lykaon and as punishment Zeus changed him into a wolf.

²⁶ There are several references to predatory wolves in the *Il.*: 4.471-72; 11.72; 13.102-3; 16.156, 352; 22.263.

²⁷ De Roguin (1999).

²⁸ See n. 24. See also Gershenson (1991: 133), De Roguin (1999: 106), Detienne (1998: 56-57).

god through the poem.²⁹ However, he does show concern for values important in the text, especially pity and respect – (ἔλεος and αἰδώς) – mostly for his favourites, and with corresponding scorn for his enemies.³⁰ His ‘pity’ for his favoured mortal, Hector, is notable and his concentration on Achilles’ brutality and recklessness (24.39-43) could be seen to compare favourably with the attitude of Hera who only cares which of Achilles or Hector is the more *philos* of the gods (24.55-63). This benign but partial side to Apollo is also seen in his support of his priest – ἐπεὶ μάλα οἱ φίλος ἦεν (1.381) – ‘for he was very dear to him’.³¹ Apollo’s partiality is conventional for Homeric gods and, as noted, is not a problematic feature but it will be one of the questioned epic qualities he represents in the *Oresteia*. His one-sided support of Orestes in *Eumenides* characterises him as limited in comparison with the more expansive and inclusive nature of Athena.

²⁹ As does Kirk (1985, vol. 1, Intro.: 5). Kirk sees Apollo’s ‘gentle darts’ – ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν (24.759) – bringing an honourable and beautiful death in contrast to the terrible effects of his arrows at the beginning. However, he has just been described using arrows to slay Niobe’s six sons (24.605-6) suggesting, rather than restoration of moral order, a punishment of enemies (Niobe who has insulted Apollo’s mother) and support of friends (Hector).

³⁰ Davies (1997: 45), who notes generally the lack of a moral side to Apollo, finds him ‘profoundly humane’ in *Il.* 24. Allan (2006: 13, n. 55) notes Apollo’s striking divine pity.

³¹ Trans. Murray (2003). Interpretation of this depends on the translation of *philos*, however. Adkins (1972: 8) saw an entirely pragmatic relationship between gods and men in which Chryses has furnished honour and so expects the friendship (in Adkins’ sense of the reciprocation of someone on whom we should be able to rely) of the deity.

In Homer the warrior aspect of Apollo predominates over his functions as a healer-god and as a musician,³² and tragedy reflects this. Apollo does become, and possibly already is at the time of the completion of the *Iliad*, a healing god under the name Apollo *Paian* but they seem to be separate deities in Homer.³³ There are some limited suggestions of his healing function: he can take away plague as well as send it, and he ends Glaucus' pain and dries the blood from his wound (16.513-29). However, as Graf notes, neither of these makes him a specialised healer and the fact that he sends and takes away the plague is part of a pattern based on a precise model of how illness originates – from the anger of a god which must be placated.³⁴ It is likely, nevertheless, that Apollo, probably because of this role in the *Iliad*,

³² Although the *paian* as a *song* is sung to Apollo (*Il.* 1.472-73).

³³ See Huxley (1975) on the healing deity, *Pajawon*, at Crete (the name found in Linear B tablets) usually taken to be a separate deity from Apollo who otherwise has not been found in Linear B, although later they merge. Rutherford (2001: 16) notes that Apollo may have been already associated with the Cretan *Pajawon* deity before Linear B but that it is not mentioned there for some reason. In Homer, Παιήων appears at *Il.* 5.401 and at *Od.* 4.232, but no overt connection with Apollo is made. At *Il.* 5.447-48 it is Leto and Artemis who heal Aeneas. Podaleirios and Machaon are healers; Machaon is the chief physician of the Achaeans and heals Menelaus (*Il.* 4.192ff.). They are, as sons of Asclepius, grandsons of Apollo (unless this is later mythology), but they are on the opposing side to the god and no link with Apollo is made. Rutherford (2001: 11) comments that there was some later argument for Apollo as *Paian* in Homer (see his references), although there is no evidence of this in our text. Graf (2009: 16) comments that Homer's formulaic language perhaps retains a state of affairs that is out of date with contemporary religious reality. *Paian* and Apollo are also separate figures in Hes. fr. 307 (MW) and Solon fr. 13 (West), although they are connected in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* (517), and in Sappho fr. 44 (West).

³⁴ Graf (2009: 16-17).

comes to be thought of as the god responsible for the plague at Athens.³⁵ He will be referred to as *Paian* by all three tragedians but usually to question his healing efficacy.

There are only two explicit references to Apollo's musical activity in the *Iliad* (1.601-4; 24.63), although it is mentioned more frequently in the *Odyssey*.³⁶ In tragedy music is not a significant association for the god before Euripides. The first mention of Apollo as god of music is in *Medea* (426) (see further below in the section on cult).

Homeric Hymns and Choral Lyric

The *Homeric Hymns*, *paians* (and some examples of other lyrics) are chosen here as the most important texts for discussion. They are significant for Apollo in tragedy and we have reason to assume that they would be familiar among Athenian audiences.³⁷ The *Hymn to Apollo* is important for the use of its material across all tragedians. *Paian* as a genre is usually associated with Apollo, and is discussed here because of Euripides' use of its form in his lighter plays.

In the *Hymn to Apollo*, the most significant development of literary Apollo is that prophecy

³⁵ As is probably addressed in *OT*. Thucydides notes particular concern with Apollo during the plague. See 2.54. Bowden (2005: 112) comments that Athenians would associate plague with the displeasure of the gods, and of Apollo in particular.

³⁶ See Maronitis (2009: 82-84) on how the musical Apollo is more prominent in the *Od.* than in the *Il.*

³⁷ Richardson notes (2010: 1), based on a vase image (dated c.470 BCE) of a text of one, that some at least of the *Hymns* may have been school texts by this time. Swift (2010: 69) notes that there is enough evidence for *paian* performance at Athens to be confident that an Athenian audience would have been familiar with the genre's role and performance function.

is established as his main function, the whole of the second half of the poem being to *Pythian* Apollo. In tragedy too prophecy is Apollo's main function, but tragedy does not reflect the moral element of the oracle that is suggested in the hymn with its overt references to Apollo as the spokesman of Zeus,³⁸ and to the oracle as lawgiver (see *θεμιστεύοιμι* at 253, 293 and *θέμιστας* at 394 to describe the utterances of the Delphic priests).³⁹ In the *Hymn to Hermes*, as the masterful elder brother berating Hermes for stealing his cattle and lying about it (254ff. and 280-92), Apollo is notably truthful in contrast with Hermes' deceitfulness. It might be expected that there would be a moral element to the oracular god in a laudatory genre; this does not necessarily mean that Delphi was seen as a moral force at the time, and there is in fact more evidence for Delphic morality in the fourth century.⁴⁰ However, the hymn reveals that it was at least an element

³⁸ In the *Il.* Apollo is always responsive to his father's wishes and instructions. Here, as god of the oracle, he is explicitly the mouthpiece of Zeus (131-32). See this also in the *Hymn.Hom.Herm.* 535-38.

³⁹ See also Apolline justice in Alc. c.600 BCE. This is lost but some quotations are found paraphrased in one of the speeches of Himerios (Alc. fr. 142 West) where we see that Zeus sent Apollo to Delphi 'to speak thence as prophet of justice and due order to the Greeks' (trans. Davies, 1997: 46). See also Pind. *Pyth.* 11.9-10; 5. 66-67. Miller (1985: 107-8) comments that Apollo in the *Hymn* intends the oracle to have a moral role.

⁴⁰ For example, Ephorus (in Strabo, 9.3.11); Pl. *Leg.* 759c, *Epin.* 988a, *Resp.* 427b, 469a, 470a, The Delphic maxims, the most famous of which is 'know thyself' and which are often seen as embodying Delphic morality may have been carved in the late 6th century with the building of the Delphic temple by the Alcmaeonids, but this is not certain. See Parke (1967: 98-99), Lloyd-Jones (1976: 65), Bowden (2005: 70). Morgan (2009: 549-50) comments on the obscure origin of the Delphic maxims, but notes that even in the 6th century it is possible that Delphi 'actively generated moralizing anecdotes'. It also depends on whether they were perceived as having a 'moral' message: 'know thyself' at this time probably should not be seen as referring to the anachronistic concept of 'self-knowledge' but meant something more like 'know you are only human, that you are not a god'. It does later imply self-knowledge – see Pl. *Chrm.* 164d-165a. Parke and Wormell (1956:

of earlier perceptions of the oracle.

Delphi is much darker and more ambivalent in tragedy. Clay finds that the *Hymn to Apollo* 'renders Apollo's foundation pristine, purely Olympian, and untainted by any female and chthonic associations'.⁴¹ This can be contrasted with the *Oresteia* which reinstates a strong chthonic, female element at Delphi by which Apollo is 'tainted' by association, aligning him and his justice somewhat with the blood revenge of the female and chthonic Furies. There are hints already, though, of a more complex attitude to Delphi in the *Hymns*. In the *Hymn to Hermes* (534ff) Apollo's speech about prophecy contains 'As for mankind, I shall hurt one man, I shall help another' which Davies finds 'defensive, protectionist and frankly callous',⁴² and which could be a suggestion of the scepticism about Delphi which becomes a running theme in tragedy.

Apollo is already a complex figure in the *Hymn to Apollo*, and other aspects of this poem are also reflected in tragedy. For example, in the *Hymn* we see a dangerous and powerful god in the slaying of Python (356ff.) and, while in the *Iliad* his plague arrows were for men and his music playing was for the gods, at the opening of the *Hymn* he terrifies gods as well; as he goes through the house of Zeus, the gods tremble before him (1-3). Tragedy too will sometimes present a god who operates through threats and violence. Tragedy's

379ff.) discuss several 'moral' oracles, including early examples, for example the story of Cleobis and Biton at Hdt. 1.31. However, whether these were seen as specifically Delphic morality is open to debate: Bowden (2005: 70-71) does not believe any specifically 'Delphic' morality would have been perceived in Herodotus' oracles.

⁴¹ Clay (2009: 14).

⁴² Davies (1997: 47).

problematising of Apollo's remoteness may also be prefigured in the *Hymn* where his distance from humans has developed overtones of arrogance.⁴³

Apollo's associations with music and healing are more evident here than in Homer. In the *Hymn* the musical side of the god becomes as important as the archer (19-21, 187-8).⁴⁴ He is also now explicitly Apollo *Paian*, the healing god (272-73).⁴⁵ As noted, these benevolent aspects are less evident in tragedy, although some examples of praise and celebration of the god are found in Euripides' lighter plays, sometimes within the form of a subverted hymn. In *Ion*, for example, Creusa's monody combines hymnic praise of Apollo with her condemnation of her seducer.

⁴³ Apollo is ἑκκατος or far-shooter (1). Delos and Delphi are rocky and inaccessible (26-27). He is moved on from the spring, Telphousa, as a site for his temple, alerted that many chariots and mules will pass (239-76). He goes on to rocky Parnassus. Suggestions of an arrogance to Apollo are seen in the following: when Leto is finding a place to be Apollo's home, the island of Delos is afraid (66-69) and she must reassure them with an oath (83-9). Apollo is ἀτάσθαλος (67) – overbearing, violent, reckless or lawless. Clay (1989: 36) finds it a very strong, even shocking, term to apply to Apollo. Felson (2009: 152) notes that it is a word regularly associated with reckless youths, e.g. at *Od.* 8.166.

⁴⁴ See also in the *Hymn.Hom.Herm.* an aetiology of Apollo's music aspect (496). The bow and the lyre seem synthesised in the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* where Apollo says (131-32) 'the lyre and the curved bow shall ever be dear to me...'. Although less evident in Homer, there is an example of this synthesis at *Od.* 21.406-9.

⁴⁵ A possible reference to Cretan healing cult, *Pajawon*, now merged with Apollo in literature as well. The Delphic priests are from Crete (475ff., 516-19) and the poem may acknowledge a known link between *Paiēōn* and its Cretan roots. Huxley finds that the first connection between Apollo and *Paiēōn* was at Delphi (1975: 122).

In choral lyric, Apollo's portrayal is generally 'positive' with some exceptions.⁴⁶ Stories about his relationships with mortal females are mostly found in lyric (although there is a brief list of his conquests in the *Hymn to Apollo*, 208-13), including his, almost comic, failures in this role.⁴⁷ There is a preponderance of praise and celebration of Apollo in *epinikian*;⁴⁸ as a genre this would be known to Athenians,⁴⁹ but it is not discussed here as it is not as significant a form for tragic Apollo as *paian*.

⁴⁶ The iambic poet, Archil. (7th c.) refers to a destructive Apollo, although one who strikes the guilty. The line is 'And you too,/ O lord Apollo, strike the guilty ones/ with harm, destroy them as you do destroy,/ but prosper us...' (fr. 26 West). This uses the verb ἀπολλύω or destroy which would have been associated with the name of Apollo and which we will see used many times in tragedy and other literature. See Aesch Ag. 1080-1; fr. 23a from *Bassarai*; Eur. *IT* 715, and 975; *Or.* 121, 130, 572, 956; and fr. 781.11f. Plato's Socrates comments on the the name Apollo 'which...is generally supposed to have some terrible signification' (Pl. *Cra.* 404e1-2).

⁴⁷ See Kakridis (2009: 633-40), Hubbard (2009: 613). See also Graf (2009: 105ff.) on Apollo as the 'hapless lover'.

⁴⁸ Usually in association with gold, light and music, see *Ol.* 14.12; *Nem.* 5.24; *Pyth.* 1.1; *Pyth.* 2.15; *Pyth.* 5.65; *Isth.* 7.49. See also Alcman. (fr. 45 West). There are some less celebratory aspects in Pind. usually involving abduction of mortal females, but these are generally treated with a positive slant; see Felson (2009: 150-51). In Pind., Apollo's roles as Homeric warrior-god and god of the oracle are important here, as in tragedy, but are also given a positive slant; see Athanassaki (2009: esp. 406, 423).

⁴⁹ Although possibly less so than *paian*. See Swift (2010: 39-40).

Paian is a choral genre with a cultic base, but otherwise not easy to define. *Paians* vary in form and performance context.⁵⁰ They are sung to communicate with a god and are usually, although not always, performed at celebrations or to ward off evil. They are usually, although not always, associated with Apollo – most of the surviving ones are Pindaric cult songs to Apollo. We can assume, among tragic audiences, some familiarity with *paian* as a genre as there is evidence for paianic performance at Athens.⁵¹ There are few direct allusions to well-known pieces of *paian* (or lyric generally) in tragedy,⁵² rather its main significance is how its form, like that of the hymn, is often subverted, an effect which would have had meaning for the audience. The laudatory nature of hymn and *paian* as genres is undermined in tragedy, either by being placed in juxtaposition with the negative judgements of Apollo made by characters or by the expressions of suffering at the hands of the god made by the singer – as with Creusa’s monody in *Ion*. *Paians* function to create a sense of community and solidarity, and Rutherford notes how individually sung *paians* would themselves be seen as transgressive.⁵³

An example of lyric which is more important in terms of story material for tragic Apollo is found in Stesichorus’ *Oresteia*, a lyric poem in two books of which only fragments remain.

This contains a reference to Apollo giving a bow to Orestes and is the earliest extant

⁵⁰ On *paians* see Swift (2010: 61ff, including discussion of the formal features of *paians* at 66ff.). See also Rutherford (2001). On the make-up of the audience for, and the context of, lyric performance see Budelmann (2009: 11-16), Hornblower (2009: 50-51), Swift (2010: 35ff.).

⁵¹ See n. 37 above.

⁵² Swift (2010: 27) notes that tragedy rather uses motifs from lyric or evokes its moods.

⁵³ Rutherford (2001: esp. 59).

example of their relationship.⁵⁴ Neschke concluded that the most important innovation of Stesichorus in his treatment of the Orestes myth was the dominant role given to Apollo.⁵⁵ It is likely that the tradition is older but, after Stesichorus, it becomes a fixed feature of the myth.⁵⁶ Athanassaki notes that Stesichorus' depiction of Apollo is closer to that of Aeschylus than to Pindar, and that it sowed the seeds for tragedy's challenges to Apolline justice.⁵⁷

We have seen the different manifestations of Apollo associated with different genres, driven by the varying expected roles which these genres fulfill. Tragedy, from Aeschylus onwards, will find the most dramatic and thematic potential in the oracular (and related ephebic) roles of Apollo. It will also exploit the ambivalence of the Homeric warrior-god for a Greek audience, often placing the Homeric god at the centre of tensions between epic and fifth-century values. Later, Euripides in particular will access these different registers, with varying degrees of ambivalence, in his presentation of Apollo.

Apollo cult at Athens.

Evidence points to a connection between Apollo and the 'outside' at Athens. This connection is literal – in the peripheral placing of his cult sites and in his association with peripheral activities. It also carries the suggestion that his cult status in the city is somewhat

⁵⁴ Stes. (fr. 40 *PMG*) – schol. on Eur. *Or.* 268.

⁵⁵ Neschke (1986, cited in Athanassaki, 2009: 454-55).

⁵⁶ As noted by Sommerstein (1996: 199).

⁵⁷ Athanassaki (2009: 455).

marginal. These aspects are a major factor in the particular kinds of problematic treatment which Apollo receives in the plays, and tragedians draw on the spectators' awareness of them.

There are problems in making judgements about Apollo cult. The evidence – mostly in archaeological findings, in historical literature, iconography and inscriptions – is limited; one main source for cult is tragedy itself and this creates the danger of circular argument. There are also the questions of how we interpret the evidence of cults and how we make comparisons across different media; and there is the added problem that time scales are not precise. I start with the Apollo cults which are actually referred to in the tragic texts, and for which we have other evidence, and look at how tragedy uses these. One important aspect for study will be how some changes in tragic Apollo in the later fifth century can be related to developments in his cult. Illustrations on vases will be a useful source here – the dramatic increase in the number of images of Apollo on vases suggests an increased cultic interest in the god in the later fifth century.

Apollo is an important cult figure at Athens by the early fifth century, before the period of extant tragedies begins. His increased profile at Athens can be related to the promotion of Delian Apollo by Peisistratos in the late sixth century and the formation of the Delian league in 478.⁵⁸ Delphi's influence at Athens is usually seen to date from the time of Cleisthenes when the *Pythia* was entrusted with the choice of selecting the ten eponymous heroes of the new tribes.⁵⁹ Apollo *Pythios* becomes an important cult figure at Athens with

⁵⁸ Shapiro (1989: 48ff.).

⁵⁹ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 21.6. See Garland (1984: 80-81).

the building of the *Pythion* temple in the sixth century and the establishment of the *Pythion* cave sanctuary (although the date of the latter is unknown).⁶⁰ It could be said, however, that Apollo is not really a god of Athens. Zeus and Athena are the chief city gods as *Agoraios* and *Agoraia* and, as *Zeus Phratrios* and *Athena Phratia*, they are the gods of the phratries, the kinship groups to which every Athenian male belonged. Apollo is not related to the phratries.⁶¹ Parker in fact does not find him to be a very political god generally at Athens.⁶² It is particularly revealing for a warrior-god that he is not appealed to as a god of war; as Parker notes, ‘Apollo is not immediately associated with Athens’ military activities’.⁶³

Apollo is associated with the periphery of cities generally. Birge comments on the number of sacred groves of the god at his sanctuaries, a far greater number than for any other Olympian god, and how this is related to his marginal role in relation to cities generally.⁶⁴ However, this seems to be particularly the case at Athens where, as De Polignac comments,⁶⁵ Apollo’s position is unique. Cities usually had central temples and equally important temples outside of the city – an arrangement he calls ‘bipolar’ cities. ‘Periurban’

⁶⁰ See Shapiro (1989: 50ff.). Apollo *Delios* and *Pythios* are closely related (51).

⁶¹ Graf (2009: 107) notes that Apollo played no part in the *Apatouria*; ‘its main sacrifices were offered to the divinities that represented the Athenian state, *Zeus Phratrios* and *Athena Phratia*.’

⁶² Parker (2005: 405, 402). Apollo does have some civic functions in the 5th century. The *Delphinion* served as one of the five murder courts and there was a meeting of the Assembly in the precinct of Apollo *Lykeios* around the beginning of the 5th century (*IG*³ 105.34).

⁶³ Parker (2005: 402).

⁶⁴ Birge (1994: 9-11).

⁶⁵ De Polignac (1995: 22-23, 83, 84).

sanctuaries in these other cities were often the most important – such as the temples of Apollo at Argos and Thebes. Athens, on the other hand, is uniquely ‘monocentric’ – the only city in Greece without a great nonurban sanctuary and the only city where the major civic or religious procession set off from the periphery and led to the heart of the town (the *Panathenaia* to the Acropolis).⁶⁶

Most of Apollo’s cult sites at Athens appear, from archaeological evidence, to have been peripheral. His *Pythion* and *Delphinion* temples and the *Lykeion* sanctuary are all located on the outskirts of the city.⁶⁷ There is the question of whether we should take physical placement literally to mean marginal in significance,⁶⁸ and there have been different views on this. Burkert finds that the cults of Apollo are also peripheral in significance.⁶⁹ Simon comments that recent excavations have shown the *Delphinion* to be a very important early classical temple and that, as the *Pythion* and *Delphinion* cults were associated with

⁶⁶ De Polignac’s approach to the significance of centre and periphery theory has been questioned. See Polinskaya (2003).

⁶⁷ The *Pythion* temple was said to be built by the elder Peisistratos. See Thuc. 2.16 and 6.54; the latter mentions the inscription (IG1² 761) on the altar of Pythian Apollo found on the west bank of the Ilissos. See Travlos (1971: 100) and Wilson (2007: 153). The *Delphinion* temple was on the banks of the Ilissos river. On its function see Arist. [*Ath.Pol.*] 57.3; Demosthenes. 23.74. See also Graf (2009: 109-110) on Apollo *Delphinios*. The *Lykeion* was a sanctuary and gymnasium on the outskirts of the city. See Jameson (1980) on inscription IG 1²138 about a tax to be paid by land forces to Apollo for the maintenance of his *temenos*. It is probably from the 2nd half of the 5th century. He believes that the location of the inscription and the identity of the contributors (those who used the *Lykeios* sanctuary) are evidence that it was to Apollo *Lykeios*. This is widely accepted. See Graf (2009: 121).

⁶⁸ See Polinskaya (2003: 85-106) and Dodd (2003: 71-83).

⁶⁹ Burkert (1975: 8).

purification which could not take place within a town, this cannot be evidence for their peripheral significance.⁷⁰ I would say that, nevertheless, they *are* peripherally placed and still associate Apollo with the outside. It is also evident that Athens is a city where the centre is symbolically important.⁷¹

We could add here Apollo's *Aguieus* altars as further evidence of his association with the outside.⁷² These altars were probably small stone columns which were situated outside the gates of Athenian houses. Farnell found them to be connected with protection of the migratory ways and colonisation, noting that, although the *Aguieus* is close to the house, Apollo did not 'cross the threshold' as did, for example, Zeus and Hestia. Otto also found, similarly, that the *Aguieus* epithet is to do with cleansing the paths of evil rather than being connected with the house itself. Detienne saw the role of Apollo *Aguieus* as one of establishing and founding. He goes into unknown places, defines them and names them, but is not further involved in the city.⁷³

⁷⁰ Simon (1983: 74).

⁷¹ Croally (2005: 61): 'Athens puts real weight on [the] idea of the center and its relationship to democracy.' 'What happened at the center was crucial for the democracy: tragedy happened at the center. And what Athens put at its center was authority: tragedy shared that authority.'

⁷² An *Aguieus* altar probably stood outside most doors at Athens. There is no archaeological evidence but there are many references and/or places where such an altar is apparently addressed, in drama and other literature: Aesch. *Ag.* 519, 1081, 1086; *Cho.* 583; Soph. *Laocoon* (fr. 370 *TrGF*), *OT* 918, *El.* 635, 1372, *Trach.* 209; Eur. *Phoen.* 221, 631, *Ion* 185-86, *El.* 216-17 and 221 (probable); Ar. *Eq.* 1320, *Av.* 1233, *Vesp.* 875, *Thesm.* 748; Men. *Dysk.* 659; Paus. 1.31.3, 8.32.4; Plaut. *Bacch.* 172-73; Dem. *Meid.* 21.51, *Macart.* 43.66. See Parker (2005: 18) for discussion and further refs. See also Graf (2009: 93).

⁷³ Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 148-49, 151), Otto (1964: 68), Detienne (1998: 21ff.).

Apollo seems not to have had any cult site in the *agora* in the fifth century; the *Patrōos* temple, believed to have been built by Peisistratos, was destroyed in the Persian invasion and not rebuilt until the fourth century. Hedrick argues persuasively on archaeological grounds that, after the destruction of this early temple, there was no Apollo *Patrōos* temple or *temenos* in the *agora* until the fourth century when the role of Apollo *Patrōos* becomes considerably more important at Athens.⁷⁴

Unlike Zeus, Athena and Poseidon, Apollo is also unrepresented on the Acropolis but he has a cave shrine underneath it on the north west side. The Acropolis caves will be examined in more detail here because the significance of caves as a motif will be discussed in *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi*, and in *Ion* (where they are referred to overtly) in some depth. There seem to have been cave shrines to Apollo, Pan and Zeus under the Acropolis (Clinton finds a reference to them in *Agamemnon*⁷⁵).

Evidence for cults generally for the mid fifth century is limited, but there is some archaeological evidence for the caves of Apollo and Pan,⁷⁶ and literary evidence for all

⁷⁴ Hedrick (1988).

⁷⁵ Clinton (1973).

⁷⁶ See Parsons (1943) on the excavation of the caves, the finding of votive offerings to Apollo, including one which apparently dates to the 6th century. Reliefs dedicated to Pan have been found in the vicinity. Parsons (1943: 208) finds the paved court and spring (*klepsydra*) below the caves to be clearly parts of the building programme initiated after the defeat of the Persians (233). He believes the Apollo cave to be the focus for Athenian Apollo worship and of the city's relations with Delphi, symbolised by the *Pythais*, the *theoria* from Athens to Delphi which he thinks started from here. Buxton comments on how springs were perceived as pure and ultimately mysterious – giving access to the sacred (1994: 109). This would add to the argument of

three, including a cave of Zeus.⁷⁷ It is possible to form connections between the archaeological and ancient literary references to create a convincing picture of the existence of all three of these cave shrines at this time.

In Euripides' *Ion* there are references to the caves as the 'Long Rocks', and we see that 'the

sacred use of the caves and also possibly that one was sacred to Apollo in the light of his purifying function (Delphi is also built next to a spring).

⁷⁷ See Paus.1.28.4. Strabo 9.2.11 and Philostr. VS 11.5. both call it the *Pythion*. Strabo notes the proverb, 'when the lightning flashes through Harma' which was taken as the sign for the *Pythaistae* to take the offering to Delphi. Athenians kept watch for it from the altar of Zeus *Astrapaeus*, within the walls between the *Pythion* and the *Olympion*. Philostr. helps to corroborate that one of the caves was the *Pythion*. It describes the route of the Panathenaic ship (a ship on wheels used in processions) including its being drawn past (παρά) the *Pythion* and coming to where it is now moored (i.e. near the *Areopagus*, Paus. 1.29.1). One weakness in the idea that the three caves are referenced in *Agamemnon* (as Clinton notes, 1973: 285) is the lack of archaeological evidence for a cave of Zeus, the main evidence for this cave being Strabo 9.2.11. The Pan cave became the centre of a state cult after the Persian Wars (479 BCE) when Pan is said to have intervened at the battle of Marathon on behalf of the Athenians (Paus. 1.29.4 and Hdt. 6.105) and this was celebrated every year. If the Apollo cave and the Pan cave are on the north west side, to which the evidence seems to point, then the large cave between them would seem to be the *Olympion* and dedicated to Zeus. Thuc. 2.15-16, refers to temples of Olympian Zeus and Pythian Apollo, among others, facing southwards from the Acropolis. Parsons thinks that Thucydides was just mistaken and meant north; Clinton (287) and Travlos (1971) believe there was a *Pythion* and an *Olympion* on the north and on the south. Broneer (1960: 59) finds that Thucydides must be referring to caves as he is using this as evidence for the limited extent of the city at the time (the Ilissos temples would prove the opposite). Broneer (60-61) discusses the *Pythion* and *Olympion* and their location and argues convincingly for the early existence of the caves. Travlos too (1971: 61) locates the early *Olympion* and *Pythion* in the caves.

lightning fire of Phoebus [Apollo] honours' this place'.⁷⁸ This seems to refer to the same lightning as that mentioned by Strabo (n. 77). As for whether the Apollo connection was established by the mid fifth century, the *Pythais* (the Athenian delegation to Delphi) was apparently very ancient.⁷⁹ It may go back to a time when Zeus, not Apollo, was supreme at Delphi, and this may be a possible explanation for the lightning connection.⁸⁰ We do not know for certain that the *Pythais* set out from outside the cave, but Parsons' work on the paved court outside it makes it seem very likely that this was its purpose.⁸¹ It is also likely that the *Pythais* would set out from the same spot from which they watched for the lightning over Harma which was the signal for the procession to begin (as seen in Euripides and Strabo above). The ridge outside the caves also has a clear view of Mount Parnes on whose southern end Harma is situated.

Scholars have had different views on the significance of Apollo's cave shrine.⁸² In the

⁷⁸ *Ion*, e.g. 936-38. See also Ar. *Lys.*: as the women leave the Acropolis, Lysistrata (720-21) indicates 'Pan's Grotto' (see also 911), and the *klepsydra* is mentioned at 913. After 918 Myrrhine enters the grotto, represented possibly on stage by flanking doors (according to Henderson, 1996). See Paus. 1.28.4.

⁷⁹ Shapiro (1989: 490): Apollo was venerated in the Acropolis cave 'probably from early times.'

⁸⁰ Cook (1914: 628, 815ff.) explained the lightning over Harma connection: Zeus as lightning god was once lord of *Pytho*, and Apollo may have taken over this aspect as he takes over Delphi. Cook comments that the phrase 'when it lightens over Harma' was already proverbial by the 5th century.

⁸¹ Parsons (1943).

⁸² Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 156) comments that Apollo never succeeded in 'scaling' the Acropolis and had at best a narrow cave dwelling on the foot of the northern side. Simon sees rather that Apollo had a 'spectacular cave' on the north west side of the Acropolis (1983: 74).

Oresteia I find it strongly suggestive of otherness, the outside and the alien.⁸³ In *Ion*, however, in the very different Athenian context of the later fifth century, and possibly reflecting the shifting status of the god, the central location of the cave becomes a centring force for Apollo; it is where he fathers Ion and becomes *Patrōos* of Athens and the Ionic races.

If the locations of Apollo's cult sites are peripheral, two of his major cult roles – god of the oracle and god of ephebes – associate him with the outside and, in the case of the ephebic role, with marginal activity.⁸⁴ The oracle was of continuing influence at Athens through the fifth century,⁸⁵ but it is often a dark and mysterious power in tragedy, expressing fears and misgivings about oracles generally and tensions between Athenian democracy and Delphic prophecy. The ephebic role also associates Apollo with the outside, with the liminal status of initiants at Athens, and with the potential threat of the young man who is still 'outside' the city.⁸⁶

⁸³ See Buxton (1994: 105ff.) that 'caves were associated with activities perceived as outside the norm' and his further examples of their other-worldly associations. See also Ustinova (2009) on caves.

⁸⁴ Graf (2009: 56) explains the dominant role Apollo plays in divination by his association with the area outside of civilised human activity where oracular shrines are usually to be found and that many myths talk about the isolation of Apollo's oracular shrines. He adds that this region is also where he presided over the training of the ephebes.

⁸⁵ See Buxton (1999) and Harrison (2006) on how, in the 5th century, rationality does not necessarily replace religion, and that they are not necessarily in opposition. Bowden (2005) argues for the continuing importance of the oracle in 5th-century Athens.

⁸⁶ Graf (2009: 15): 'adolescents were nearly as marginal in the Greek city as foreigners.'

In contrast with Apollo, we can compare the central cult sites and festivals of Athena. Graf notes that ‘In the cities of the Greek world, Apollo competed with Athena for the possession of the most important city sanctuary. [...] Only a few other cities selected other divine protectors’.⁸⁷ I note that Athens supremely belongs to Athena in this sense. Parker comments on the unique dominance of Athena at Athens that ‘she towers over all the other gods in the pantheon’.⁸⁸ Farnell pointed out how Attic coinage is dominated by Athena and rarely presents Apollo’s figure.⁸⁹ As noted above, De Polignac comments that Athens is the only city where the major civic or religious procession – the *Panathenaia* – set off from the periphery and led to the heart of the town. I add to this that even the marginal god Dionysus is centrally represented by the Great Dionysia itself. Seaford describes Dionysus as ‘the deity who above all others belongs both to the heart of the savage universe and to the centre of the town’.⁹⁰

Apollo does have two major festivals at Athens, the Pyanopsia and the Thargelia; these, although the Thargelia had a *pharmakos* (scapegoat) element that once involved human sacrifice, generally have benign associations as harvest celebrations of new life. Tragedy is selective, as it is with other literature, of the darker and more ambivalent features of Apollo cult and, where it does allude to these more benign aspects, it subverts their ritual functions to highly ambivalent effect. For example, in Sophocles’ *OT* we see some evocation of rituals connected with the Thargelia festival. Oedipus is associated with the role of

⁸⁷ Graf (2009: 125).

⁸⁸ Parker (2005: 359ff.).

⁸⁹ Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 318).

⁹⁰ Seaford (1994: 243).

pharmakos in that he asks to be expelled from the city. He does not in fact become a scapegoat and the, often commented on, ‘open’ ending of *OT* subverts the closure of the ritual whereby the *pharmakos* provided the cleansing element which enabled the festival to end with the celebration of new life.

Some of Apollo’s more benign aspects are not important features of Athenian cult. Graf highlights music and healing as two of his most important aspects across Greece. Apollo does not seem to have been very prominent as a healing god at Athens (although Graf notes that Apollo as a healer is less important everywhere after the Archaic period⁹¹). After the plague hit Athens from 430, Apollo becomes even more of a focus in tragedy for fears about the gods, while it is Asclepius who develops cult importance as a healing deity⁹² (the Asclepius cult was introduced from Epidaurus in 420).⁹³ Apollo’s association with music is also less important at Athens than elsewhere. Wilson notes that, in marked contrast to some other cities, ‘Even at Apollo’s great urban festival, the Thargelia, we find no sign of the

⁹¹ Numerous healing Apollo cult sites are mentioned by Pausanias but not at Athens and many may also be much later than this period. There was, for example, a healing Apollo of Malea in a sanctuary built for the people of Epidaurus (Paus. 2.27.8). Levi notes (1971: 196, n. 162) that it dates from as early as the 7th century, a hundred years before the cult of Asclepius. On the lack of evidence for a healing Apollo at Athens, see Parker (2005: 412-13) and Mikalson (1991: 57). Burkert (1985: 147) comments on healing Apollo as a major aspect but does not mention Athens. Rutherford (2001: 32) comments that, compared with other cities, the evidence for performance of the healing hymn, *paian*, at Athens is slim. See Graf (2009: 84).

⁹² Parker (2005: 412-13) finds no conceptual difference between Apollo and Asclepius. I would say that even if Asclepius is part of Apollo it is a part which, at Athens, separates off along with the healing function.

⁹³ Mitchell-Boyask (2007) argues for the importance of Asclepius as healing god of the city (due to the central positioning of the *Asklepieion*) and also in the theatre (the *Asklepieion* also being built next to the theatre). He finds this was specifically a reaction to the plague of the years following 430.

lyre – nor even the god’s preferred hymn, the *paian*,⁹⁴ and Apollo appears never to have received the kind of worship seen at the cithara contests at the Delphic *Pythia* festival and the Spartan *Karneia*.⁹⁵ However, this may overstate the case a little and, as Swift notes, there is some evidence for *paian* performance at Athens.⁹⁶

Music and healing are not important aspects of tragic Apollo either.⁹⁷ The tragic god reflects, therefore, both his cult status at Athens and his Iliadic persona. The fact that there are some references to musical aspects of Apollo in Euripides may be related to tragedy’s address to a wider audience in the later fifth century. There are, however, other factors to consider in this such as Euripides’ apparent interest in choral lyric and his importance as a practitioner of the ‘New Music’. These aspects will be discussed in the chapters on Euripides.

In the later fifth century, there seem to have been two main developments in Athenian Apollo cult. The first is an increased interest in the god’s cult generally, evidenced by a dramatic increase in depictions of Apollo on vases – a process that has been called ‘Apollonisation’.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ See Wilson (2004: 277, n. 17) and Rutherford (1994: 113; 2001: 32).

⁹⁵ See Wilson (2004: 280-81).

⁹⁶ See above n. 37.

⁹⁷ Wilson (2004: 279) sees that in tragedy in fact the absence of the lyre and cithara are marked in a ‘powerfully over-determined manner’. See use of the word ἄλυρος, literally ‘lyreless’ in Aesch. *Ag.* 988-91, *Eum.* 332-33; Soph. *OC* 1222-23, *Trach.* 643, fr. 849; Eur. *IT* 144-47, *Alc.* 447, *Hel.* 185-87, *Phoen.* 1025-27, 1033-34.

⁹⁸ First outlined by Moret (1982: 135).

Shapiro describes three phases in this:⁹⁹ (1) in the second quarter of the fifth century, depictions of the Delian triad (Leto, Apollo and Artemis) see a new surge of popularity which may be a response to the new prominence of Delos as seat of the League and of Apollo as its patron;¹⁰⁰ (2) the increase in sacrifice paintings of Apollo where he is either present or represented, for example, by a palm tree or tripod suggesting he is the recipient of the sacrifice.¹⁰¹ Shapiro comments that there are virtually no comparable scenes of sacrifice to other Olympian gods on Attic vases of this period – ‘Apollo therefore occupies a uniquely privileged position in Classical iconography’;¹⁰² (3) on vases from the mid fifth century, there is an increase in the number of depictions of Apollo, an increase which Moret finds sudden and massive, as Apollo appears in pictures of myths with which he is not normally associated. Moret even goes so far as to conclude that ‘Cette ubiquité du dieu, dans l’imagerie et dans le tragédie, permet de parler d’une vision apollinienne du monde.’¹⁰³

These vases, Shapiro finds, attest to a particular Athenian concern with Apollo as ancestor of the Ionian Greeks which becomes especially relevant during the Peloponnesian War. Based on this iconographical evidence, Shapiro challenges Barron’s view that on the transfer of the Delian League treasury to Athens in 454 Athena becomes chief state goddess

⁹⁹ Shapiro (1993).

¹⁰⁰ For example, Boston Museum of Fine Art, 00.347, Attic Red Figure Volute Krater, c.460.

¹⁰¹ For example, Boston Museum of Fine Art, 95.24, Attic Red Figure Bell Krater, c.430.

¹⁰² Shapiro (1993: 108).

¹⁰³ Moret (1982, esp. 132, 135). For example, Apollo observing a scene of the Dioscuri abducting the daughters of Leukippos. Gulbenkian Foundation inv. 682; *ARV*², 1042,1.

and Apollo loses importance.¹⁰⁴ He finds that, because of the move to Athens, Athenians found it necessary to embrace more enthusiastically than ever the cult of Apollo.

There is also inscriptional evidence, although limited, for increased authority at Athens for Delphic Apollo in the later fifth century.¹⁰⁵ Some limits to Delphic authority have been

¹⁰⁴ Barron (1964: 48) had found that 'the removal of the treasury to the safekeeping of Athena Polias marked her adoption as the League's chief patron in place of Delian Apollo.' Homblower, also finds Barron unconvincing and notes that Athens never 'lost sight of Apollo *Delios* for a moment.' (1992: 183, see his evidence). For further discussion and alternative interpretations see Oliver (1950: 121 and 139-41), Parker (1996: 220, n. 10).

¹⁰⁵ There are two Athenian inscriptions concerning sacred interpreters or *exēgētai*:

IG i³ 131.9-11

[and the *exēgētai* whom no]w Apollo has appointed by oracle, whilst they expou[nd ancestral custom shall al]l receive maintenance; and for the future whomever [he appoints by oracle, maintenance shall also be given] to them likewise (c440-32 BCE).

and *IG* i³ 137.3-5 – Philoxenos said:

to [Apollo... sin]ce he said in an oracle that he himself [would be] exeget[e... for the Athenia]ns, and take for himself a throne in the pr[ytaneum... (c422-16 BCE).

Bowden interprets these (2005: 130-31) as appearing to record respectively the first appointment of the *exēgētai* by the Delphic oracle, to be maintained at public expense, and the setting up of a statue of Apollo or a throne in the prytaneum where the other *exēgētai* would sit when on duty. He notes that, if correctly interpreted, this supports the suggestion that there was an increased emphasis on the role of Apollo in resolving disputes about ancestral custom and sacred law in Athens in the last quarter of the 5th century. See Bowden's discussion on the text of the inscriptions (2005: 131, n. 38). See also Sidwell (1996: 52), Garland (1984: 81), Oliver (1950: 139-41).

noted,¹⁰⁶ but the fact that the role of *exēgētēs* for Apollo – with which we have already seen him associated in tragedy (*Eumenides* 595, 609) – does seem to have been made official around this time indicates a shift in perceptions of the position of Delphic Apollo at Athens.

Tragedy reflects the increased interest in Apollo found in these other sources. Euripides evidently has a particular interest in the god and there are some close parallels across different media: Euripides' *Ion* is an example of the concern with Ionian Apollo which Shapiro notes on vases. Apollonised myths are also a significant feature in tragedy at this time; the stories of Oedipus and Orestes, for example, in their earliest known forms did not involve Apollo. This could mark the beginning of an influence of tragedy on vases – one of the examples of Apollonised vases is of Apollo and Oedipus;¹⁰⁷ it may, on the other hand, suggest a parallel concern with Apollo in both media. It is notable in tragedy that the interest in Apollo cult is still expressed questioningly. Euripides, in *Ion*, does not introduce Apollo *Patrōos*, father of the Ionian races, in an entirely positive way.

The next three chapters will examine Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, highlighting the relationships between the plays and the literary and cultic material discussed here. In the creation of an Apollo figure, Aeschylus combines aspects of his epic persona with reference to Athenian Apollo cults, and deploys this god in themes which address contemporary issues.

¹⁰⁶ See Jacoby (1949: 30-33 and 38) on the importance of non-Delphic *exēgētēs* and purification at Athens.

See also Parker (1983: 140-41) and Garland (1984: 81) on the limits to Delphic control at Athens.

¹⁰⁷ See Bowden (2005: 63).

PART II: APOLLO IN AESCHYLUS

The three plays which make up the *Oresteia* are the earliest extant tragedies in which Apollo plays a major role.¹ In the trilogy, Apollo commands Orestes to commit matricide, then purifies him of the crime and acts as advocate at his trial. Aeschylus creates a highly ambivalent god figure. He has qualities clearly presented as beneficial: he is male, a 'new' Olympian and god of purification in opposition to the ancient, female, chthonic and impure Furies, and his charge, Orestes, is exonerated. However, in a treatment seen throughout extant tragedy which Aeschylus arguably inaugurates, Apollo's morality and effectiveness are questioned and he will play a problematic role in the theme of the moral complexities of justice and the changes to a democratic system.

In *Agamemnon* important aspects of Apollo are established before he becomes involved directly in the narrative of the Orestes myth in *Choephoroi*. There are allusions to and echoes of the god in Homer, not in association with Orestes but as the warrior god of the *Iliad*, which introduce a vengeful god, ambivalent for Greeks as the champion of Troy.² The play combines this with highly suggestive references to several of his contemporary cults.

¹ Apollo also plays some part in *Supp.*, while *Sept.* is part of a trilogy in which Apollo probably played a major role. References are made to *Sept.* where appropriate but it is not discussed separately due to lack of space and because most of the relevant material will have been in the lost plays. Apollo is mentioned briefly at *Pers.* 206 and *PV* 669. There are several references to Apollo in the fragments: fr. 154a 15-16 from *Niobe*; fr. 23a from *Bassarai*; fr. 86 from *Hieraeai*; fr. 200 from *Prometheus Luomenos*; fr. 350 (found in *Pl. Resp.* 2. 383a-b) possibly from *Phrygian Women* (*TrGF*).

² The Orestes story is told several times in Homer but does not involve Apollo.

In *Choephoroi* Apollo's dramatic role develops as the commander of the matricide; this play evokes Apollo's cult roles as both god of the oracle and god of ephebes in the presentation of his relationship with Orestes. The god is as ineffective as an ephebic mentor as he is menacing as giver of an oracle which commands matricide.

In *Eumenides* Apollo plays a central role in the action as the purifier and advocate of Orestes. He may be authoritative, victorious and vindicated by Orestes' victory, but elements in his presentation which recall the Trojan enemy god of *Agamemnon* and the dark oracular/ephebic god of *Choephoroi* are revealed as anachronistic, or otherwise problematic, in the context of a 'democratic' trial set at Athens.

Chapter 2: The Homeric god in Aeschylus

***Agamemnon* (458)**

The four sets of references to Apollo in *Agamemnon* – three fairly brief mentions and Cassandra's addresses to the god – establish some of his defining characteristics and introduce major themes to which he is central and which will be developed later in the trilogy; they will all, therefore, be examined closely.³ Literary allusions and references to cult aspects will be examined separately in order to deal with each in detail, but there will also be discussion of how these would interrelate for the audience.

³ Treatment of Apollo's role in *Ag.* has usually been relatively brief as scholars have tended to concentrate on his roles and behaviour in *Cho.* and *Eum.* See Winnington-Ingram (1933), Roberts (1984) and Bierl (1994). Mitchell-Boyask (2006) gives more importance to Apollo in *Ag.*, arguing for the effect of his relationship with Cassandra on the action of the *Oresteia* as a whole.

In the first three passages (discussed in the order; 47-62, 508-14, 146) we will see the significance of Homeric allusions and how they characterise Apollo. Then, returning to the first passage (47ff.), a likely reference there to an actual Athenian Apollo cult – the *Pythios* cave – will be examined. An important aspect of the approach here will be to consider closely such references which may occupy little textual space but inhabit considerable cultural space for the audience. The series of cave images which begins in this play will be used as the main example of such references, and they are discussed in detail through the three chapters. Finally, the Cassandra scene (1072ff.) will be examined from a similar angle, that is, by discussing the suggestions made by the references to contemporary Apollo cults and how they function in the ominous introduction of major Apolline themes.

Apollo, vengeance, and the justice of Zeus

In the first passage vultures symbolise the Atreidae who have lost their young, Helen, and whose cry is heard by one of three gods: Apollo, Pan or Zeus:

Chorus: ἦραν, στρατιῶτιν ἄρωγῆν,
 μέγαλ' ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες ἼΑρη,
 τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν, οἳ τ' ἐκπατίοις
 ἄλγεσι παίδων ὑπατοὶ λεχέων
 στροφοδινοῦνται
 πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,
 δεμνιοτήρη
 πόνον ὀρταλίων ὀλέσαντες·
 ὑπατος δ' αἰών ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων
 ἢ Πάν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον
 γόον ὀξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων,
 ὑστερόποινον
 πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν·
 οὔτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων
 ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος

Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς. (47-62)

This passage introduces Apollo in association with an act of vengeance. As has been noted, Apollo is not notably vengeful among tragic gods but Aeschylus emphasises this side of him in these plays. Later, in *Eumenides*, as the playwright engages with issues in the contemporary context, Apollo's vengefulness will be an aspect by which he is problematised.

Apollo's role is clearly secondary to that of Zeus and to the wider questions of justice with which Aeschylus is centrally concerned here.⁴ Once Zeus is specified as sender of the Atreidae (59ff.), the issue of the justness of the war is raised in the Chorus' comment that this was a war for the sake of a promiscuous woman. Zeus' association with justice is more wide-ranging, even universal; he oversees vengeance here but in *Eumenides* he will also oversee, with Athena as his representative, democratic justice. In *Agamemnon*, at the point at which Apollo is associated with this action, it is a response to an emotional plea, the question of justice still not addressed. The emotion is stressed by its description as grief for lost children – ἄλγεσι παίδων – emphasising the pain of the loss of Helen, the emotional pull of the revenge. Later in the trilogy this one-sided, personal vengeance will characterise oracular Apollo as commander of matricide in *Choephoroi* and as Orestes' advocate and witness in *Eumenides*.

The presentation here of Apollo's relationship with Zeus echoes its presentation in previous literature. Apollo is closely associated with Zeus in the *Iliad* and in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* where he becomes his father's spokesman. The *Oresteia*, though, echoes the *Iliad* in

⁴ Relationships among all three gods are discussed in the section below on the Acropolis caves.

particular, and the limits to their relationship which are suggested there. Homer's Apollo is on the losing Trojan side while Athena is on the side of the Greeks and plays a role in Zeus' grand plan for Greek victory. This will be echoed in *Eumenides* where Apollo will leave the action to be replaced by Athena as representative of Zeus. Apollo's role in Homer is recontextualised here where he is marginalised in the context of a democratic system and its new justice. Aeschylus' presentation of Apollo thus acknowledges the cultural dominance of Homer while also challenging epic values and their limited relevance. Aeschylus' version of the myth will itself become authoritative, one which later versions will have to acknowledge when treating the myth itself.⁵

Homeric Apollo, the enemy of the Greeks

In *Agamemnon*, allusions to and echoes of Homeric Apollo are juxtaposed with references to contemporary Athenian Apollo cults, resulting in a god figure notably problematic for a fifth-century Athenian audience. A vengeful Apollo is found in other literature but the passage at 509ff. clearly echoes the vengeful god of the *Iliad*, drawing on the cultural ambivalence for Greeks of Homeric Apollo, the champion of Troy.

This passage paints the first picture of Apollo in action, after two brief references (47ff. above and 146 discussed below). The returning Herald addresses the gods of his homeland:

νῦν χαῖρε μὲν χθών, χαῖρε δ' ἡλίου φάος,
ὑπατός τε χώρας Ζεὺς ὁ Πύθιός τ' ἀναξ,
τόξοις ἰάπτων μηκέτ' εἰς ἡμᾶς βέλη·
ἄλις παρὰ Σκάμανδρον ἦσθ' ἀνάρσιος·

⁵ See Easterling (2005: 23-36) on the reception of *Ag.* from the time of its production.

νῦν δ' αὖτε σωτήρ ἴσθι καὶ παιώνιος,
ἄναξ Ἄπολλον· τούς τ' ἄγωνίους θεοὺς
πάντας προσαυδῶ... (508-14)

These lines seem to refer to *Iliad* 1.46-52 where, because Agamemnon refused to return the captured daughter of Apollo's priest, Chryses, the god had rained arrows down on the Greek camp for nine days:

ἔκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' οἷστοι ἐπ' ὤμων χωόμενοιο,
αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος. ὁ δ' ἦιε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς.
ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἔηκε·
δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο.
οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπώιχετο καὶ κύνας ἀργούς,
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἔχεπευκὲς ἐφίεις
βάλλ'. αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί.

The passage in *Agamemnon* does not quote any Homeric phrases directly but is one example of how Aeschylus uses Homer. If the *Odyssey* is mined for plot material (the story of Agamemnon is found there as well as in the *Nostoi*, although neither the former, nor extant fragments of the latter, reveal any involvement for Apollo),⁶ Aeschylus here alludes to a passage from the *Iliad*, evoking its characteristics of Apollo and assuming audience recognition of these for effect and meaning.⁷ We can assume that this recognition would be wide; the recalled scene is one of the most memorable in the *Iliad* as the first appearance by a god and the cause of the 'quarrel'.⁸

⁶ See Herington (1985: 138ff.), Olson (1990), Goldhill (1997: 46-53), Goward (2005: 43-44).

⁷ See Hardwick (1992: 235) who notes how, in appearing to move in the space left by Homer, [tragedy] drew on Homeric echoes and allusions and used them as a springboard for invention.

⁸ Note Marshall (1996: 91) that Bk 1 was among those most likely to have been used as school texts and would therefore be familiar to the audience. Graf (2009: 10) notes how Apollo's prominence in Bk 1 continues throughout the *Il*.

The passage presents Apollo in his familiar role as the archer-god,⁹ a role which Graf suggests has inherent ambivalence;¹⁰ it also carries suggestions of the god's distance, an aspect which will be problematised in tragedy. The passage recalls, specifically, the terrible Apollo of the *Iliad* where the god sits down at a distance to shoot arrows and kills the animals first – an especially striking combination of the chillingly methodical and the indiscriminate.¹¹ We can imagine that one of the chief resonances in this passage for the Athenian spectators would be of Homeric Apollo carrying out these actions as enemy of the Greeks. Aeschylus refers to this Apollo specifically here where he is not actually vital to the main plot (Athena has a similarly important role at Troy in the *Iliad* but is not mentioned in *Agamemnon*). Apollo's main roles in the trilogy will actually be as the giver of a command oracle and as ephebic mentor to Orestes, son of the *Greek* commander, Agamemnon, which underlines that this is a non-plot element here and suggests that it has a thematic function. The effect would be to associate Apollo with the questioned values of an epic past (see, at 433-55 and 555-67, Aeschylus' increased emphasis on loss and suffering

⁹ Literary examples were seen in Chapter 1, and it is also a significant aspect of Apollo in iconography: Attic vases from the late 6th and early 5th centuries often portray Apollo carrying a bow; see Painter of Tarquinia, RC 6847; Malibu 86.AE.114; Louvre G 164; Boston 10.197; Hydria by the Berlin Painter, Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Atrusco (16568).

¹⁰ See Graf above Chapter 1, n. 9.

¹¹ See Graf (2009: 10) on the 'awe-inspiring and frightening' Apollo of the *Il*. I note that whether the killing of the animals is intended to underline Apollo's savagery is not certain. Kirk (1985 ad loc.) commented that the exegetical commentators suggested, oddly, that it may have been to give men due warning as Apollo was humanitarian, or because these notorious sniffers would pick up diseases first. Note Thuc. 2.50.1. on the Athenian plague of 430 where animals as well as humans are affected and 'dogs being domestic animals, provided the best opportunity of observing this effect of the plague.' Maronitis (2009: 84) finds that it characterises Apollo as 'utterly lethal'.

in the war and inadequate reasons for fighting) and to recall his role in the war as an enemy god, as the audience is prepared ominously for his future role in the trilogy.

The echoes of Homeric Apollo in lines 508-14 are juxtaposed with a reference to the Apollo *Pythios* cult in an example of how the interaction of cult references and epic aspects enhances the dramatic meaning and contemporary resonance of the god figure. The Herald addresses a gathering of the gods, including Apollo ('Pythian lord', 509). It is dramatically appropriate here for the Herald to address the gods of his homeland on his return from Troy. It may be a literal reference: it has been suggested that these lines allude to the actual gods of the Argos marketplace;¹² this would assume both Aeschylus' knowledge of this and, for it to have effect, that of the audience. Alternatively, it has been seen as a reference to a Zeus and Apollo partnership in a temple of the actual Athenian *agora*,¹³ but this is less likely as more recent archaeological work has shown that Apollo was probably not a god of the Athenian marketplace at this time.¹⁴ The passage has important structural and thematic functions: references to Pythian Apollo in *Agamemnon* form an introduction to the Delphic god who will play a major part in *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*,¹⁵ and it is also a further reminder of his remoteness; Apollo is a god associated with the distant Delphi.¹⁶

The juxtaposition of Apollo's epic and oracular roles raises ominous dramatic tensions. The Trojan enemy god, sender of plague arrows on the Greeks, is here asked to be 'our healer'.

¹² Wilamowitz (1904, 2: 309).

¹³ Fraenkel (1950).

¹⁴ See Hedrick (1988). see Chapter 1, p. 46 on Apollo in the Athenian *agora*.

¹⁵ Roberts (1984: 65).

¹⁶ See the discussion on the *Pythios* cave in the next section. See n. 41 below on Apollo *Patrōos* as a 4th-century development of Athenian Apollo, and Chapter 1, pp. 41ff. on Apollo cult at Athens as marginal.

Furthermore, although this aspect is not emphasised in the text, the Apollo of the *Iliad* is also a god of limited foresight (in his support of the losing side and his failure to foresee Trojan defeat, *Iliad* 17.327ff.) and he is addressed here as *Pythios*, the oracular god. These aspects raise questions about the role which oracular Apollo will have in this trilogy, and they engage with contemporary doubts and fears about the real oracle – a feature which we will see developed in *Choephoroi*.

Apollo the healing god?

The passages discussed above associate Apollo with revenge, but he is also addressed as a healer in *Agamemnon*. There is, as was noted above, only limited reference to a healing Apollo in the *Iliad*; but his dual qualities of destroyer and healer are seen in Bk 1.62ff. where, after sending the plague, Apollo is asked to save the Greeks by healing it.¹⁷ This is echoed in *Agamemnon* where, at 508-13 (quoted above), the Herald's request to Apollo as a healer (512) immediately follows the line which describes him shooting arrows beside the Scamander, the proximity emphasising his two contrasting sides and suggesting that the allusion is specific.

However, Apollo's healing function is treated ambivalently in *Agamemnon*.¹⁸ A suggestion

¹⁷ Graf (2009: 79) notes that Apollo in the *Il.* is not necessarily a specific sender/healer of plague but that this is a typical pattern of divine action. I find, nevertheless, that tragedy picks up on this aspect of Apollo as *the* plague-sender/healer even if, as such, he represents all gods who inspire fear but are the focus for hope.

¹⁸ Swift (2010: 73) notes that the paianic language of the Herald takes on a new meaning in the light of Apollo's role in Trojan epic.

of doubt about his healing efficacy was seen at 146 where we heard that Calchas had called on him to temper Artemis' anger 'lest she make contrary winds for the Danaans' (trans. Collard). The address is to Παιῶν – here clearly intended to be Apollo as the brother of Artemis (Collard includes the name of Apollo in his translation). However, he obviously does not persuade her; she *does* bind the ships and so the sacrifice of Iphigenia will be made and will be a major cause of the chain of retaliations to come.

Later, Cassandra will say:

ἀλλ' οὔτι παιῶν τῶιδ' ἐπιστατεῖ λόγῳ. (1248)

This certainly seems to indicate Apollo (see, in association with Apollo, Παιῶνα at 146 and παιώνιος at 512) and to add to the questioning of his healing powers (especially as Cassandra is a reliable prophet in *Agamemnon*; see further below). In *Eumenides* Apollo's inability to heal is one aspect that marginalises him. Athena will be the healing force who can accommodate the Furies and create a positive role for them. This undermining of a traditional quality of Apollo can be seen as typical of the often subversive nature of tragedy, and may also engage with the lack of importance of Apollo healing cult at Athens.¹⁹ In the *Oresteia* the suggestion is that Apollo could take away the plague in epic but that he cannot 'heal' in the context of fifth-century Athens.

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 51 on the lack of evidence for Apollo as a healing god at Athens.

The Acropolis caves

This section returns to the passage at 47ff. to examine lines 55-59 in detail. The aim is to show how these lines can meaningfully be read as a reference to the Acropolis caves, and to establish the cultic function of the caves and the associations they would carry for the audience – associations which they would bring to their experience of Apollo in the plays.

Three gods, Apollo, Pan and Zeus, are cited together in this passage. The reason for the association of these gods is not clear and it is useful to look beyond the text to the wider cult context for an explanation. I will argue in support of a theory that the line carries a reference to their each having a cave shrine on the Acropolis.²⁰ I believe that this reference would have functioned for the audience as a link to their extra-theatrical experience of Apollo, and that it is significant here in the creation of dramatic meaning. First, I will outline the caves as textual motifs and describe how they work through the three plays, and I will follow this with discussion of how the cave references work in this passage.

This is the first of several mentions of caves and underground caverns in the trilogy.²¹ Their mythical associations are developed further in *Choephoroi* where Delphi is twice described as a cave, evoking its mythical pre-Olympian past, the chthonic Furies and *lex talionis*,

²⁰ See Chapter 1, pp. 46ff.

²¹ *Cho.* 807-8, 952-53: the oracle at Delphi is twice described as a cavern; *Eum.* 22-23: a reference to the Corycian cave at Parnassus above Delphi; *Eum.* 804-5, 1021ff, 1036: The Furies are led to their new abode – a cavern-like place beneath the Acropolis.

hence Apollo's association with these and the creation of an element of doubt about his relevance to contemporary justice and morality.

The cave references operate as a thematically linked series of images, and by allusion to an external site of cult significance: the first reference and two later ones are to actual caves with cult functions. There is some similarity to Lebeck's model of 'prolepsis' in image series in the *Oresteia*.²² The cave references do not have the same structural function or the same relationship to major themes as Lebeck's examples, but they are significant for perceptions of the image of Apollo in the plays; the main point is that they would have been particularly so for the fifth-century audience for whom they were familiar cult sites; and they are even relatively close to the theatre (on the north west of the Acropolis, where the theatre was on the south east).²³ As such they may form *more* obvious and meaningful references for the audience than verbal patterns (perhaps not as readily discernible in performance) as significant aspects of their cult experience.

As is often noted, the audience at the Great Dionysia is likely to have been particularly aware of the surrounding environment because of the openness of the theatre itself.²⁴ This created an experience very unlike that of the modern enclosed theatre and one where, in a sense, the plays could be said to take place within the city as much as within the theatre

²² Lebeck (1971) discusses sets of images such as snakes, nets and yokes which are introduced enigmatically, whose meaning unfolds in stages with the full meaning becoming clear through the trilogy. However, Lebeck's series work by 'verbal similarity' unlike the cave images.

²³ See, for example, Wiles (1997, 2003) and Revermann (2006) and their discussions of the relationship between theatrical space and its environment and its significance for performances.

²⁴ See Schechner (1977: 115)

itself.²⁵ The argument here draws on approaches taken by, among others, Wiles in seeing the importance of aspects outside the text, and the play as ‘an event set in space and time’.²⁶ Here a specific, familiar Apollo site with cultic and mythical associations for the audience becomes part of performance meaning and part of the dramatic construct of Apollo. This is not to claim that there is a direct relationship between the site and the theatre (as seen in Mitchell-Boyask, for example²⁷), but to suggest that a local cult would be a more immediate aspect of audience awareness than it would for a modern reader of the text (and as speculated below, the cult site may even have been indicated in stage action).

Let us look again at the passage at 55-59 from the point of view of the cave references:

ὑπατος δ' αἰών ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων
 ἢ Πᾶν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροον
 γόνον ὀξύβοαν τῶνδε μετοίκων,
 ὑστερόποινον
 πέμπει παραβάσιν Ἑρινύν.

The association of these three gods here is prominent because it is the first mention of any gods in the trilogy. They seem to be related by being high – ὑπατος – and by an association with vultures – μετοίκων – referring to the vultures at line 49.²⁸ There is a

²⁵ Rehm (2002: 37) comments that the theatre was less a building than ‘landscape architecture’.

²⁶ Wiles (1997: 4, 8). See also Ubersfeld (1982: 23).

²⁷ Mitchell-Boyask (2008) explores the specific influence on drama of the proximity of the Asclepius shrine to the theatre.

²⁸ αἰγυπιός is a vulture, but is sometimes translated as ‘eagle’ (Lattimore: 1953). There are also later references relating the Atreidae to αἰετος or eagle at *Ag.* 137 and *Cho.* 246. Verrall translated μετοίκων as ‘licensed dwellers’ and Lattimore adds ‘sky’ (‘sky-guests’) to suggest birds as metics of the air. A verbal

likely, though unprovable, association among the three gods through an indirect reference to three caves – shrines to Apollo, Pan and Zeus. They are high in the sense that they are next to each other on the north west slope of the Acropolis, and vultures may have flown around them.²⁹

One strong argument for the theory is that commentators have been unable to find any other reason why these three gods are mentioned together. At line 55, ὑπατος means high – either literally or metaphorically. Verrall comments that the birds dwelt in the *high* abodes of the gods – Apollo is ‘high’ as god of augury, Pan of animal life and Zeus of universal right.³⁰ We might argue, though, that all Olympian deities as gods of the upper realm and dwellers on Olympus are high. As Zeus and Pan are more obviously associated with high places in cult, it is the inclusion of Apollo which has caused most consternation. Denniston and Page comment that, in epic, the word ὑπατος was used only of Zeus and was always metaphorical (supreme in power).³¹ They find that, as it here covers Apollo and Pan, it must be literal; Zeus and Pan dwell high up and it is therefore natural to say they avenge the

echo has been noted – the juxtaposition of μετοίκων and Erinyes – at *Eum.* 1028-29 where the Eumenides wear the red cloaks which may be an allusion to metics at the Panathenaia. (Bowie, 1993: 27, n. 112) .

²⁹ Although the argument put forward by Clinton (1973) is not widely influential, I find it convincing. Clinton relates the vultures and the gods with the next lines (60-62), the closeness of Zeus *Xenios* with the ξένοι of Paris, the *Atreidae* (which the birds symbolically represent), but he does not follow the meaning of the cave reference any further than that. He also does not cite Parsons (1943) which would have given considerable support to his argument.

³⁰ Verrall (1904 ad loc.)

³¹ Denniston and Page (1957 ad loc.).

wrong done to birds but, they add, one would not have expected to find Apollo in this company.³² They refer the reader to Fraenkel who finds that the inclusion of Apollo is the only point that really requires an explanation.³³ Pan dwells on mountains and Zeus is associated with eagles and vultures; but he also concludes that we do not know why Apollo is included. Roberts finds no clear explanation for Apollo's inclusion,³⁴ but adds that it makes sense to see Apollo, Zeus and an Erinyes associated in an act of vengeance here (as I noted above, however, this is revenge *against* Troy and not relevant to Apollo). It also does not explain the inclusion of Pan, suggesting that there must be another reason. Spindler explains that Pan is a mountain god and Zeus is associated with vultures.³⁵ Apollo is associated with the Atreidae as their main protector through the trilogy, an idea which I will challenge in the course of discussion of the play, while Spindler's explanation also seems to be an awkward combination of the symbolic and the literal. Collard comments: 'Apollo: named to anticipate his later role...Pan: named as god of mountain and wilderness and of their creatures...Artemis' concern for the hare (134ff.) is thus anticipated. Zeus' name connects the simile directly with what precedes (43) and follows (60)'.³⁶ I would counter again that, as Apollo's 'later role' involves being a mentor to a Greek, this cannot really be seen as anticipated here.

³² Dietrich (1978: 2) notes that Apollo was associated with mountains in some places but it is not likely that this would be an important attribute at Athens

³³ Fraenkel (1950 ad loc.).

³⁴ Roberts (1983: 64).

³⁵ Spindler (1984: 47-49).

³⁶ Collard (2002 ad loc.).

In Chapter 1, examination of the evidence showed that it is very likely that the caves were associated with these three gods at this time. The birds referred to in the passage may also have been a related feature. There are references to birds at these caves in *Ion* (501-5 and 903) where, as these lines clearly refer to the Acropolis caves, they probably refer to actual birds. The word used there is *πτανός* – something feathered or winged – not specifically vultures but obviously creatures large enough to be imagined snatching and eating a child (903). Circling vultures would also be likely where sacrifices were made, as we know they were here (Herodotus 6.105). This would seem more likely than Lloyd-Jones' suggestion that Apollo is perhaps mentioned because eagles and vultures circled over his shrine at Delphi.³⁷ Vultures at the Acropolis itself would be more familiar and may even have been visible from the theatre. The word *τῶνδε* at line 57 may suggest the indication of something close. Fraenkel found this usage a difficulty and argued that, because of this suggestion of closeness not making sense, it should be *τῶν δέ*. It might in fact indicate something close, as in birds near to the theatre itself, and it is even possible to imagine the general direction being indicated by an actor (although it should be pointed out, as do Denniston and Page in their note on this line,³⁸ that *τῶνδε* can mean 'as just mentioned' rather than actually physically close).³⁹

³⁷ Lloyd-Jones (1970 ad loc.).

³⁸ Denniston and Page (1957 ad loc.).

³⁹ Hogan (1984 ad loc.) noted that if there is an Apollo shrine this is on the 'wrong slope' for an actor to indicate, but I would imagine the direction could still be indicated even if the caves were not visible (and birds overhead may have been).

The question of the significance of Apollo's cave shrine in assessing Athenian perceptions of him is more of an issue for Apollo than for the other two gods; Pan is traditionally associated with caves, while Zeus is also represented above on the Acropolis itself. Apollo is not usually associated with caves and is not represented on the Acropolis. As was seen above (Chapter 1, p. 48), scholars have seen Apollo's cave as both positive and negative evidence for his cult status. I suggest that the cave reference draws on the location of the actual cult and the mythical suggestions of caves generally. Like some other Athenian Apollo cult places, such as the *Aguieus* altar and the *Lykeion*, *Pythion* and *Delphinion* temples (see Chapter 1), it is located peripherally, away from the centre, here of course under rather than on the Acropolis. This associates Apollo himself with the peripheral and suggests his limited civic significance at this time, especially in comparison with the overwhelmingly dominant and centrally located cults of Athena.⁴⁰ In the mid fifth century Apollo is not the civic god he will become by the fourth century as father of the city and the Ionic races, when the temple of Apollo *Patrōos* is built in the *agora* and when, as such, he also has a role as a god of the phratries and their Apatouria festival with which he is not connected in the fifth century.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 45 on the importance of the idea of 'centre' at Athens.

⁴¹ See de Schutter (1987) on Apollo *Patrōos* in the 4th century. Apollo *Pythios*, who becomes *Patrōos*, is described as ancestral to the city by Demosthenes in the 4th century (*De Corona* 18.141.3): τὸν Ἀπόλλω τὸν Πύθιον ὃς πατρώϊός ἐστι τῇ πόλει; and Apollo *Patrōos* is mentioned by Plato (*Euthydemus* 302d1) as Ἀπολλων πατρώιος διὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἰωνος γένεσιν. In Diod. Sic. 16.57.4 we see that the Athenians boasted τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα πατρώιον αὐτῶν εἶναι καὶ πρόγονον.

The cave and its function may again evoke the god's distance. It is a shrine to Apollo *Pythios* (the Delphic aspect of the god) and is the site of the gathering of the delegates before the *Pythais*, the Athenian procession to Delphi which, as discussed in Chapter 1, was probably in existence at this time. This underlines the point that Apollo is not a city god but of most significance to Athenians as god of Delphi – foreshadowing his role in the later plays. The only fifth-century reference to the *Pythais* is actually in the opening speech of *Eumenides* (9ff.) where Apollo, uniquely, stops off at Athens on his way from Delos to Delphi.⁴² This passage goes on to say that Hephaestus' sons (or Athenians as sons of Erichthonius, son of Hephaestus), as builders of roads, are said to have conveyed Apollo on his route (12ff.). The scholion to line 13 comments that when the actual sacred delegation went to Delphi it was preceded on the road by men carrying axes. Aeschylus appears to create an *aition* for the actual *Pythais* which followed this same route.⁴³ It seems likely that, at the opening of *Eumenides*, Aeschylus refers to an already existing route of the *Pythais* that began from outside the same caves referred to here at *Agamemnon* 55-59.

A further association of caves is likely to have been with the mysterious and other-worldly: Zeus was said to have been born in a cave on Mount Dicte; in the *Odyssey* they are the home of the Cyclopes; in cult many of them, such as the Corycian cave at Delphi, function

⁴² The *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* traces the more common version of the route of Apollo (186, 214ff.), via Mount Olympus, Thessaly, Euboea, and Boeotia.

⁴³ Parker (2005: 86) believes that Aeschylus is probably referring to the actual *Pythais* institution here. Rutherford (2004: 76): 'In the *Eumenides* Aeschylus imagines the "path-making sons of Hephaestus" (12-14) conveying Apollo to Delphi...a detail that seems to anticipate the Athenian *theōria* to Delphi in the historical period.' Lambert (2002: 370) notes inscriptional evidence from the late 5th century with evidence for the *Pythais* and a mention of Harma – with no set calendar date because it is related to lightning.

as shrines of Pan and the Nymphs. The monster Typhos was bred in the Corycian cave and Echidna had her lair in a cave.⁴⁴ They also suggest the uncivilised: in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (452-53) it is said that man before civilisation 'lived beneath the earth like swarming ants/in sunless caves.' (trans. Grene). In historical writing they have been described as being perceived as passages to the underworld.⁴⁵

In Chapter 1 we saw Buxton's comment that 'caves were associated with activities perceived as outside the norm'.⁴⁶ The cave itself may suggest a dark side, an element of the mysterious and the non-civilised in perceptions of Apollo. The god's sites of Delos and Delphi in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* are also bleak, rocky and uninhabited.⁴⁷ For this reason Farnell,⁴⁸ with his assumptions about the god, had found the cave an unlikely spot for such an 'advanced political type' as Apollo worship, but, as I have suggested, his civic role was not very advanced at this time.

This is not to suggest an actual chthonic aspect to Apollo cult; several Olympian gods (Hermes, Demeter, Dionysus) have chthonic associations but neither caves nor chthonic cult were typical of Apollo. Dietrich comments that 'Caves [...] almost invariably played a

⁴⁴ For Typhos see Pind. *Pyth.* 1.16-17; for Echidna see Hes. *Theog.* 295ff.

⁴⁵ See Paus. 3.25.4-5: at Cape Taenarum there was a shrine shaped like a cave and some of the Greek poets have written that here Heracles brought the hound of Hades up from the underworld.

⁴⁶ Chapter 1, n. 83. See Buxton (1994: 105ff.) for further examples of other-worldly associations for caves.

⁴⁷ Richardson (2010, on 529-30) notes that Delphi's natural barrenness later became proverbial. I note that Delos may not have been entirely barren as Apollo was born beside a palm tree. Graf (2009: 32) comments that Delos and Delphi are both rather unlikely places for major sanctuaries.

⁴⁸ Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 157).

significant part in the ritual of Apolline oracles. But caves were never Apollo's natural habitat...' ⁴⁹ Buxton notes that the cave of the 'Holy Ones' at Athens is an example of the cave perceived as 'an element of wildness within civilisation' which could also be applied to Apollo's cave, as could his comment that 'caves were for outsiders of all kinds'. ⁵⁰ The brief cult reference here, therefore, resonates with both the audience's experience of cult and with mythic associations. ⁵¹ The suggestiveness of the caves will evolve through the trilogy into evocation of a dark and chthonic aspect for Apollo. In *Choephoroi* the Delphic oracle will itself be described twice as an underground cavern and the significance of these early references will become clear as we see how the use of caves suggests similarities between Apollo and the chthonic Furies. ⁵²

Apollo and Cassandra

One of the effects of the Cassandra scene (1072ff.) is again to highlight Apollo's distance, and his vengeful and destructive aspects, with particular resonance for the fifth-century audience as Cassandra addresses Apollo by titles related to two of his contemporary cults –

⁴⁹ Dietrich (1978: 5). Although, I would note that there are examples of Apollo cave shrines outside cities. See Paus. 10.32.4 on Magnesia where Apollo has a grotto and, at 10.32.3, on Themisonion where Apollo is one of the Cave-gods.

⁵⁰ Buxton (1994: 106).

⁵¹ Buxton notes that in classical times caves were more frequent in mythology than in actual religion (1994: 108). He suggests they might 'recur as often as they do in myths because of their usefulness as symbolic operators.'

⁵² References in the *Oresteia* to the dark, underground nature of the Furies: *Eum.* 273 (Hades), 71-72 (Tartarus), 417 (underworld), 321, 385-86, 395-96, 416, 745, 792-93, 844, 1034 (night/dark).

Aguieus and *Lykeios* – which are treated in a highly ambivalent way in *Agamemnon*. The destructive Apollo/Cassandra relationship introduces Apollo's problematic role in two wider themes of the trilogy – gender conflict and prophecy – while Cassandra herself prophesies Apollo's future association with Orestes and the matricide.

Cassandra declares that Apollo pursued her, that she deceived him, that in revenge he made her prophecies disbelieved, and that he has now brought her to Argos to her death. The idea of a personal relationship between Apollo and Cassandra is probably new in Aeschylus; it is not seen in Homer, but Aeschylus may have developed the idea from the *Cypria* where Cassandra does have prophetic gifts.⁵³ There may of course be lost versions of the story of which the audience was aware.

This scene is a digression from the main action. After Agamemnon has entered the palace we hear Cassandra's outburst of speech and song, its dramatic importance highlighted by its inclusion here when the audience would be expecting Agamemnon's murder.⁵⁴ Cassandra calls on Apollo in her opening cries of horror:

ὥπολλον ὥπολλον,
ἀγυιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός. (1080-81=1085-86)

⁵³ According to the schol., Cassandra does not have prophetic gifts in Homer (see schol. to *Il.* 24.699 'for the poet does not know [Cassandra] as a prophet.'). It is possible that Homer did know of this aspect and suppressed it; it may be notable that, at *Il.* 24.699ff., Cassandra is the first to see her father returning with Hector's body. She certainly has these gifts in the *Cypria* where she gives a warning to Paris when he builds ships for his expedition. See *Argumentum* to the *Cypria* (West). See also Cassandra as a prophet in Pind. *Pae.* VIIIa fr. 52i Maehler = B3 Rutherford.

⁵⁴ See Schein (1982: 11).

This reference to a contemporary Athenian cult role of Apollo would again trigger associations for the audience with their cult reality, carrying suggestions not as evident to modern readers of the text.⁵⁵ As discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 45), Apollo *Aguieus* was god of the ways or the streets. Here we can assume that the *Aguieus* altar is a stage feature because of the evidence for it in the text. Cassandra is generally thought to be addressing one here.⁵⁶ This would have worked on different levels as a reference. It is dramatically appropriate: the altar stands outside Agamemnon's house to which Cassandra has been brought and it represents her nemesis, Apollo, who has led her here. Here, unusually, the address to the *Aguieus* altar is specifically *to* Apollo of the ways, making the use of the epithet itself here significant.⁵⁷

It conjures Apollo's association with distance, the outside of the city, with Troy and with Delphi. Apollo *Aguieus*, while probably functioning as a protector of the house, is notably

⁵⁵ Swift (2010: 74) notes the Chorus' comment that it is inappropriate to mention Apollo in a lament (1074-75, 1078-79), but that in this context the audience *would* find it appropriate.

⁵⁶ Hogan (1984 ad loc.) notes that Cassandra addresses an image of Apollo, possibly a conical stone. Taplin (1978: 59) notes that Cassandra says this as she reaches the sacred stone of Apollo *Aguieus*. Rehm (2002: 79) describes a small aniconic column which may have stood before the central door of the *skēnē*. Poe (1989: 117) notes that this altar was most likely not permanent on stage but was used when the *skēnē* represented a house. Mitchell-Boyask (2006: 288) believes rather that in *Ag.* this is a statue which is echoed with thematic significance by the statue of Athena in *Eum.* See also Arnott (1962: 46, 66) on altars in Aeschylus, and Wiles (1997: 16, 70-72) on altars on stage generally.

⁵⁷ At Soph. *OT.* 918ff., Jocasta addresses Lycaean Apollo at the *Aguieus* pillar. At Soph. *El.* 635 Clytemnestra prays at the altar to 'Phoebus Protector'. In the same play Electra addresses it (1376-83) as 'Apollo, lord' and 'Lycean one'. At Eur. *El.* 221 she addresses it as 'Phoebus Apollo'. Note, however, Eur. *Phoen.* 631 which is to god of the ways.

outside it; he is not actually a god of the household itself – as are Zeus and Hestia, for example – and as Apollo of the ways he is by definition also linked with the outside of the city. The *Aguieus* altar marks the place where the way ends and also marks the limits of Apollo's main sphere which too ends where civilisation begins. These connotations of distance are magnified: in *Agamemnon*, Apollo *Aguieus* has brought Cassandra (1087) from distant Troy,⁵⁸ underlining further the god's Trojan connections in this play. Indeed, Rehm describes Cassandra's death as murder of the last Trojan which 'brings the carnage at Troy home to Argos.'⁵⁹ To Athenians this might also act as a reminder that Homeric Apollo was on the Trojan side. In Cassandra's first lines she calls on Apollo, uttering a cry of pain which is usually seen as typically non-Greek:⁶⁰

ὄτοτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ·
ὥπολλον ὥπολλον. (1072-73)

This also connects Apollo somewhat with the barbarian, the 'other', in this play and we will see further evidence of this connection later in the trilogy. The altar may also have represented the Delphic *omphalos* – mythical centre of the world but distant from Athens.⁶¹ As Cassandra addresses the *Aguieus* altar, then, we see a converging of the different realities of stage, cult and epic in this heavily layered moment: Apollo of epic Trojan past, distant in place and time, is brought almost literally to the doorstep as Cassandra addresses

⁵⁸ Morgan (1994: 140) sees Cassandra herself as an element which distances Apollo. In *Ag.* we have access to him chiefly through his prophetess Cassandra while he involves himself in the action at one remove.

⁵⁹ Rehm (2005: 358).

⁶⁰ For example by Collard (2002 ad loc.) who also notes the similar cry of the presumably non-Greek Chorus at *Cho.* 159.

⁶¹ See Dietrich (1978: 7). Paus. 10.5.4 records a tradition that *Aguieus* was one of the founders of the Delphic oracle.

an object on the stage which represents a familiar cult object found outside the houses of Athenians, and which simultaneously recalls Delphi, forecasting the future role for Apollo as the Prophet god.

This use of the altar also makes ironic reference to Athenian cult experience: if it was perceived as representing Apollo's protection of the house, here it is the house to which Apollo has led Cassandra and where she will be killed (1291). That Apollo *Aguieus* is a destructive god here is emphasised by Cassandra's use of the word ἀπόλλων (at line 1081) which puns on the name Apollo and the word for destroy or ruin. The association between Apollo's name and 'destroy' seems to have had some resonance as it is found in lyric and several times in tragedy, especially in Euripides where it also emphasises Apollo's destructive side.⁶² It is notable here that it is only used by Cassandra; he is her destroyer – ἀπόλλων ἐμός (1081). The Chorus call Apollo Λοξίου (1074) and τὸν θεόν (1078). This could be seen to signify that as Cassandra will be proved right in her prophecies she is also right in her use of a name for Apollo that emphasises this side of the god. The Chorus had twice said in response to Cassandra's opening cries that Apollo is not a god for lamentation (1074-75 and 1078-79), but their perception is presented as limited and that of Cassandra, the prophetess who sees past, present and future, as the truer one here.⁶³

⁶² See Chapter 1, n. 46 for other uses of the word. Collard notes the biblical *Apollyon* – 'The Destroying Angel' (2002 ad loc.).

⁶³ See also *Sack of Ilion, Argumentum* (West) where Cassandra and Laocoon warn that the wooden horse contains armed men, as a literary precedent for Cassandra's reliable predictions.

The nature of prophecy itself is extremely ambivalent in these plays. In *Agamemnon* it evokes fear (975), it brings bad news (1083, 1098-99, 1132), and it is hard to understand (1255).⁶⁴ The ability to know the future is in itself undesirable (251-53).⁶⁵ The theme of prophecy was introduced ominously earlier in *Agamemnon* through the dark associations made for the *Pythios* cave, and by the Herald's calling on the Trojan Apollo of limited foresight as *Pythios* (508-14). The Cassandra scene overtly underlines this.

Cassandra knowingly distances herself from oracle-mongers when she says 'Or am I a false seer, a hawker at the door, a babbler?' (1195-97, trans. Collard). Her prophetic power seems to operate through her mania. It is in fact likely that the image of the frenzied Pythia at Delphi – for which we do not have any other evidence – is rooted in the presentation of Cassandra here,⁶⁶ and, the truth of her visions being evident, the audience would also accept her perception of Apollo. As well as revealing certain aspects of Apollo's nature, Cassandra also predicts his future. She foretells the coming of Orestes who will avenge them both by killing his mother, and thus Apollo's dark future role as the commander of matricide.

⁶⁴ See Flower (2008: 17) on how the dark, unpredictable, and dangerous side of divination in the plays is related to the nature of tragedy. Johnston (2009: 227) notes that through the play, divination, or any knowledge not gained through mortal experience is repeatedly presented as untrustworthy. See also Bowie (2009: 212) on this as an aspect of the 'privileging of Athens over Delphi' in the *Oresteia*.

⁶⁵ Goldhill (1997: 63) comments that Cassandra shows that certain knowledge brings merely the heightened sense of unavoidable doom. See also *PV* 250-53 where Prometheus' gift to men is to stop them from foreseeing doom.

⁶⁶ Goward (1999: 78, n. 15) asks whether Aeschylus creates the prototype of the frenzied prophetess out of the thematic requirements of this drama.

We are led to accept Cassandra's judgement of Apollo but it is not certain what is meant by his having led her here, or how he destroys her. It seems likely that, as Roberts notes, this is not meant to be in any way specific but suggests that she is generally possessed by him.⁶⁷ It is also not clear why she says it is for a second time – τὸ δεύτερον – (1082); the first time could be the attempted rape,⁶⁸ or it could refer to Apollo's having made useless her gift of prophecy.

As for why he destroys her, this, and the level of blame on the god, are also open to debate. Cassandra says Apollo wrestled with her while 'breathing his favours' (1206, trans. Collard). The Chorus ask if she had a child and Cassandra says she had consented to Apollo's advances but then cheated him (1206-8). She may have been punished for reneging on promised favours.⁶⁹ However, the image of wrestling – παλαιστής (1206) – which is in no other version,⁷⁰ raises the question of how Cassandra could wrestle with Apollo but remain a virgin.⁷¹ There is no other story in which a young woman successfully resists a god in a physical encounter. Possibly Apollo's desire was fulfilled – κάρτ' ἔμοι πνέων χάριν (1206) – but then she deceived him, exactly how being unclear.⁷² Rehm comments that she may have killed a new born child – normally offspring always result

⁶⁷ Roberts (1984: 66, n. 23). See also on this Fontenrose (1971: 108-9), Mitchell-Boyask (2006: 275).

⁶⁸ Collard (2002, on 1082). See 1202-12.

⁶⁹ See Hogan (1984 ad loc.).

⁷⁰ Collard (2002: lvii) notes that Orestes' fight for vengeance is frequently compared with wrestling. See Ag. 63 and *Cho.* 339. Apollo's wrestling can be seen in terms of ephebic behaviour.

⁷¹ Noted by Kovacs (1987: 330).

⁷² Noted by Kovacs (1987: 326, 332-33)

from coupling with a god.⁷³ Indeed, Poseidon in the *Odyssey* (11.249) says that the embraces of a god are never fruitless.

Cassandra has evidently deceived Apollo somehow,⁷⁴ but how far we are meant to see this as justification of the god's treatment of her is open to question. There is possibly some implied criticism of her deception of a god. Perhaps her prophetic power has brought her too close to the boundaries between gods and humans which Apollo guards.⁷⁵ Here, as he of course gave her the prophetic powers, it presents him as particularly arbitrary and capricious. Cassandra is overwhelmingly presented as undeserving of her fate. In Chapter 1, we saw how, in lyric, stories of Apollo's abductions of mortal women were in fact given a positive slant.⁷⁶ Tragic presentation of Apollo and mortal women is more human-centred, from the point of view of, and evoking sympathy for, the women (Cassandra, Creusa).⁷⁷

The Cassandra scene thus introduces Apollo's role in the theme of gender conflict in the trilogy. Feminist approaches to the *Oresteia*, especially that of Zeitlin,⁷⁸ have seen the theme as central, and the conflict between Apollo and the Furies as its hub. Apollo's problematic role in the gender theme, however, is one example of how his presentation

⁷³ Rehm (2005: 354).

⁷⁴ Hubbard (2009: 615) also notes that Cassandra's being able to deceive Apollo foreshadows the problematisation of his omniscience and authority in *Eum.*

⁷⁵ Schein (1982: 12) finds that 'the simultaneous more-than-human power and all-too-human weakness of Cassandra resemble those of Achilles in the *Iliad*.'

⁷⁶ Chapter 1, n. 48.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 1, n. 47. In lyric Apollo is generally unsuccessful with rather than destructive of females.

⁷⁸ Zeitlin (1978). See also Goldhill (1997: 152), Goward (2005: 85).

engages with contemporary social tensions. One of the major movements of the trilogy is towards affirmation of patriarchy: Apollo defeats the female Furies and his gender-based arguments at the trial are vindicated by Athena. His role as the divine symbol of masculine superiority, however, is problematised by the presentation of his treatment of Cassandra, by his later attitude to the Furies, and by his marginalisation by the female Athena.

Apollo's nature is underlined by the other epithet used by Cassandra when she addresses him as Apollo *Lykeios* at 1256-60:

παπαῖ· οἶον τὸ πῦρ· ἐπέρχεται δέ μοι.
ὅτοτοῖ Λύκει' Ἄπολλον, οἱ ἐγὼ ἐγώ.
αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη
λύκωι, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσίαι,
κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν.

The translation of words with this *lyk-* prefix as 'wolf' is, as was discussed in Chapter 1, more widely accepted than its other meanings ('Lycian' and 'light'). Hogan argues that 'flame' at 1256 supports Lattimore's translation of Λύκει' Ἄπολλον here as 'King of light'.⁷⁹ This is possible but 'wolf' possibly carries more narrative logic and resonance as it is mentioned again at 1259, referring to Aegisthus, and probably meaning that Cassandra sees Apollo the wolf-god, at this point, as the supporter of Aegisthus.⁸⁰

However, we should consider the possibility of other meanings or suggestions, especially 'Lycian' as Cassandra is from Troy while Apollo's own Trojan connections are highlighted in the play (although, as noted in Chapter 1, this depends on whether there was any

⁷⁹ Hogan (1984 ad loc.). Lattimore (1953).

⁸⁰ Higgins (1976: 203) and De Roguin (1999: 108) both make this interpretation.

perception of Apollo as Lycian at the time). It may also have drawn on a secondary meaning of ‘light’ as a ‘play’ on Apollo as *Phoebus*, god of light, and suggesting here his opposing light and dark sides. The suggestions of ‘wolf-god’ in the use of Apollo *Lykeios* are in fact clearer in some other tragedies (especially Sophocles’ *Electra*, 644-47). However, it does seem a likely way for Cassandra to address the god who has brought her from Troy to her death.

Apollo as *Lykeios* would possibly also carry associations of fearsomeness from previous literary treatments. The formidable Apollo of the *Iliad*, as we saw above, is described as *lykēgenēs*. Apollo *Lykeios* is also found in Aeschylus’ previous dramas. In *Suppliants* (686-87) we see:

εὐμενῆς δ’ ὁ Λύκειος ἔ-
στω πάσαι νεολαίαι.

Here De Roguin’s interpretation of Λύκειος as denoting ‘wolf’ may be less convincing as the passage does not present a particularly fierce god.⁸¹ A vengeful Apollo *Lykeios* is suggested in *Seven Against Thebes* (145-46) where the Chorus of Theban women call on Apollo:

...Λύκει’ ἄναξ, Λύκειος γενοῦ
στρατῶι δαΐωι.

⁸¹ De Roguin (1999: 119-20) believes (citing Dowden, 1989) that the use of ‘wolf’ here is linked with young, uninitiated girls who will not marry and who are exiles from another land; the wolf-like suggestion is because they are threatening to society.

Apollo has hated the kin of Laius (692) whom he has instructed not to have children (745ff.).⁸² Apollo probably played a part earlier in the trilogy in the destruction of Laius and Oedipus. De Roguin interprets here, where the translation as ‘wolf-god’ seems more certain because of the accompanying ‘be a very wolf’, that the prayer is heard, that a messenger announces the city is safe, but that Eteocles and Polyneices are dead (800-2).⁸³ The seventh gate is Apollo’s and he has destroyed them.

Although fierceness might be expected from a wolf-god, Apollo *Lykeios* associates the Apollo of the *Oresteia*, again, with a particularly personal revenge. Cassandra addresses Apollo *Lykeios* (1257) who gave her the gift of prophecy and now strips her of her prophetic robes having led her here to die. It also relates specifically to *kin* revenge, both *Lykeios* as supporter of Aegisthus killing Agamemnon and later, in *Choephoroi* 421-22, as commander of Orestes to kill his mother. Electra will say there that ‘wolf-like and savage, my heart has a rage no mother’s fawning will soothe’ (trans. Collard) which suggests that, as killers, Orestes and Electra become agents of Apollo *Lykeios*.⁸⁴

The epithet *Lykeios* would also resonate for an Athenian audience with elements of their cultic reality. There is considerable evidence that it was an important cult at Argos where

⁸² Roberts (1984: 75) notes that Apollo is likely to have been involved in the destruction of Laius and Oedipus. Gershenson (1991: 16) on *Sept.* finds that the implication is that the wolf will be fierce and destructive.

⁸³ De Roguin (1999: 104-5).

⁸⁴ As Bierl interprets (1994: 91). See also De Roguin (1999: 110).

the play is set.⁸⁵ There is the question of how familiar Aeschylus, or the Athenian spectators, would be with the Argive cult. Apollo *Lykeios* is used again in Sophocles' *Electra*, also set at Argos, which suggests Athenian familiarity with it. However, it is not used in Euripides' *Electra* which is also set at Argos, and it is used in *OT* (911-23) which is set at Thebes, suggesting reasons besides the literal setting for the reference. The most important association for Athenians, because closer and more familiar, would be their own cult site, the *Lykeion*, a gymnasium and Apollo sanctuary on the outskirts of the city which was a practice ground for land forces.⁸⁶ It is again peripherally placed;⁸⁷ this is of course related to its function but, still, is another example of the association in cult between Apollo and the outside of the city.

Apollo *Lykeios*, whose significance will be developed in *Choephoroi*, is also a god associated with the liminal status of ephebes and possibly with the exterior literally – the young men spent a period of their initiation outside of the city. Ephebes themselves have often been closely associated with wolves, prowling the outskirts of the city and representing a threat until initiated into society. *Lykeios* functions structurally in *Agamemnon*, therefore, by looking forward to Apollo in one of his roles in *Choephoroi*

⁸⁵ See numismatic evidence from the early 5th century (Seltman, 1933: 95, cited in Gershenson, 1991: 8). See Thuc. 5.47; Paus. 2.19.3. The Athens/Argos alliance was a topical issue. It may be significant that Aeschylus sets *Ag.* and *Cho.* at Argos (the schol. on Eur. *Or.* 46: '...Homer puts Agamemnon's palace in Mycenae, Stesichorus and Simonides in Sparta.'). Commentators have often found references which express a positive attitude to the alliance at *Eum.* 289, 670 and 765.

⁸⁶ Jameson (1980).

⁸⁷ See Travlos (1971: 345) on the siting of the *Lykeion* near the city walls.

where it too will be developed in a particularly dark way – the mentor who orders matricide and threatens his ephebic charge with horrific punishments if he does not carry it out.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how an Apollo who is notably ambivalent for a fifth-century Athenian audience has been established at the opening of the trilogy. Close examination of the Homeric allusions and echoes has revealed their conceptual and thematic importance. The different Athenian Apollo cults, although briefly mentioned in the text, have also been revealed as important as they draw on pre-existing associations of the god with distance and marginality at Athens.

Looking at these aspects together has shown how they interact in the play, how epic, myth and cult associations are drawn on before Apollo is involved in the mythic narrative. Through the rest of the trilogy we will see further why he is introduced in this way. In *Choephoroi*, the warrior god of Troy is temporarily repressed; the Apollo figure develops as god of the oracle who commands Orestes to commit matricide and as the ephebic god who offers him protection. However, we do not see any moral development in the god and his morality and effectiveness continue to be questioned in his new roles.

Chapter 3: God of the oracle and god of ephebes

Choephoroi

In *Choephoroi* Apollo's dramatic role develops as he is now involved in the main mythic narrative. The dramatic world shifts from that of the city to the family as Orestes reports how Apollo has commanded him to avenge his father's murder by committing matricide, and afterwards to go to his shrine at Delphi to be purified. Apollo's presentation shifts register from epic warrior to an evocation of his cult roles as god of prophecy and of ephebic initiation. In the first play questions were raised about Apollo's morality and effectiveness through reference to his epic persona and cult aspects such as *Lykeios*. This questioning is reflected here in the use of his oracular and ephebic roles: the god commands Orestes to commit matricide, threatens him with dire punishments if he fails to carry them out, and then offers him limited protection afterwards.

The discussion will focus on the oracular and ephebic roles as Apollo's two most important functions in *Choephoroi*. Roberts and Bierl each saw these roles respectively as the main reason for the god's ambivalence in tragedy.¹ A chief aspect of the approach here is to question the idea that either of these, or any other single inherent aspect of Apollo, is the 'key' to his tragic presentation. This chapter will show how, in *Choephoroi*, the Apollo/Orestes relationship – that of the Delphic god and a young man – would resonate for Athenians with both his oracular and ephebic functions.² The play to some extent undermines the authoritative

¹ See Introduction, n. 12.

² There is some evidence that this relationship is not new in Aeschylus. Apollo does not appear in the Orestes homecoming story in the *Od*. The epic *Nostoi*, *Argumentum* (5) (West) mentions the murder of Agamemnon by

nature of these cult roles. Broadly, it could be observed that, in *Choeophoroi*, Apollo's oracular command raises moral questions about the god while the presentation of his ephebic function raises doubts about his effectiveness – although the two roles and their suggestions interact and, indeed, there are tensions between them.³ There will be particular concern with the associations of distance and marginality which these roles carry as this will continue to be a major aspect of Apollo's tragic presentation.

Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and the revenge by Orestes, but surviving fragments do not mention Apollo. The inclusion of Apollo in the *Oresteia* seems to reflect the increase in Delphic influence at Athens, the growth in importance of the cult of Apollo *Pythios*, the development of Apollo's association with ephebes (all discussed in Chapter 1), and the process of 'Apollonisation' of myths (especially those of Orestes and Oedipus) which was described by Wilamowitz (1896: 246-56 and 1920: 83-87). A connection between Orestes and Delphi is also seen at Pind. *Pyth.* 11. 34-36 (Strophius, father of Orestes' companion, Pylades, lives at the foot of Parnassus), although Athanassaki (2009: 455, citing Neschke, 1986: 294-95) notes how Orestes kills Clytemnestra with the help of *Ares* in this poem. The relationship between *Pyth.* 11 and the *Oresteia* also depends on the fact that it was performed at Thebes, on Aeschylus' knowledge of it (see Athanassaki, 2009: 412), and on dating. See Finglass (2007) on *Pyth.* 11 including the issue of dating. Bowra (1969: 222) notes that *Pyth.* 11 is variously said by ancient commentators to have been performed in either 474 or 454 and he prefers the latter date which, if correct, would be after the first performance of the *Oresteia*. See further in Athanassaki (2009: 445) on dating. (I do not discuss the relationship in cult. There are numerous examples of Orestes cults; for example, at Keryneia in Achaia (Paus. 7.25.4) and at Corinth (Paus. 2.31.6-7 and 11, the latter was related to the sanctuary of Apollo). However, there does not seem to be evidence of this association at Athens. See Bierl (1994: 156, n. 65) and Burkert (1985: 238) on the *Choes* – one of the days of the Anthesteria at Athens and a drinking contest where everyone was seated separately and in silence. The aetiological myth relates how Orestes was entertained in this way in Athens after the matricide but does not seem to involve Apollo directly.)

³ Hubbard (2009: 607-8) notes a central paradox in the identity of Apollo as both the authoritative all-knowing oracular god and the inexperienced adolescent (the latter as seen in Pind. *Pyth.* 9.5-70).

The oracular and ephebic aspects of Apollo and their functions in the play will be discussed in turn, using, to some extent, different approaches because the nature of the evidence in the text is different. The first section will show how Aeschylus presents a particularly dark picture of Delphic prophecy. There will be examination of oracles in the wider context of other literature and actual practice in order to aid assessment of spectators' perceptions of the oracle in this play. Next, there will be close textual examination of how Apollo's own language characterises his prophecy. Third, there will be discussion of two textual references to the Delphic sanctuary as a cave. These two brief references are examined in some detail because of the importance of their associations for a fifth-century audience.

There is less textual evidence in *Choephoroi* for Apollo as a god of ephebes; the relationship of the god with Orestes is not overtly ephebic. However, there is evidence in the text of both Orestes as an ephebe and of Apollo as a mentor. The assumption made in this thesis is that this would evoke the ephebic role of Apollo in cult with its inherent ambivalences and suggestions of marginality. It also echoes some previous, highly problematic, literary treatments of Apollo's association with young men. The ephebic suggestions are given considerable space here because this will continue to be a major role for tragic Apollo.

Real and literary oracles

From the fifth-century point of view, it is to some extent a false distinction to separate real from literary oracles.⁴ In historical sources, especially Herodotus, there are grey areas between

⁴ Maurizio (1997: 312ff.) notes the impossibility of verifying 'actual' oracles.

legendary and real, and all types of oracles would interrelate in Athenian perceptions.⁵

However, there is a difference between tragic oracles and both the real – the practical everyday advice given by the real Delphi – and the benevolent, occasionally even moral, Delphi seen in other literary genres such as hymns and choral lyric.

There is the question of the limited evidence for real oracles, and of how we find and interpret contemporary perceptions of them. Bowden lists all known questions from the Athenians to the oracle from the sixth to the fourth century.⁶ These are found in inscriptions, quotes from orators, the works of writers from the fifth and fourth centuries and of some later writers. They are not all necessarily accurate and represent probably only a very small proportion of the total. From this evidence, real oracles seem to involve not prediction but mostly advice on everyday matters, usually religious, given to a city or community.⁷ The oracle thus seems to function ostensibly as a benevolent, at least neutral, authority to be called on for help.

Chapter 1 discussed some evidence of a ‘moral’ element to the oracle in earlier literature, especially in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Pindar. As noted there, these are laudatory genres in which a moral element might be expected. In tragedy, in contrast, there is a tradition

⁵ Fontenrose (1978) catalogues Delphic oracles in four groups: historical, quasi-historical, legendary, and fictional. His categories are of course modern impositions and have not been without criticism: see reviews by Mikalson, Brent, Dietrich (1980). See also Johnston (2005) on Fontenrose’s classifications.

⁶ Bowden (2005: 109ff.) chooses eight topics (from Fontenrose’s list, 1978) to illustrate the range of Athenian questions to Delphi: plague/famine/drought/catastrophe/war, portents and prodigies, problems of rulership, welfare of the city or state, desire to found a new colony or city, worship of and desire to honour and please the gods, and religious problems.

⁷ See Fontenrose (1978: 11ff.), Amandry (1950: 149-68), Roberts (1984: 21), Bowden (2005: 23-24).

of dark prophecies associated with (often violent and revengeful) death, exile, and deception.⁸ Aeschylus' oracles in earlier plays all involve violent death, for example in *Seven Against Thebes* (617-18, 745-49, 799-802). There is also an Aeschylean passage (fr. 350 *TrGF*, found in Plato, *Republic* 2.383a-b) which is often used as evidence of a negative presentation of Apollo as a prophet in Aeschylus because Thetis reports that the god promised Achilles a long and sickness-free life but has killed him. As with all fragments, we are limited by not knowing the context,⁹ but this passage can easily be taken as critical of the Delphic god in associating him with deception and the killing of Achilles.¹⁰ The *Oresteia* is part of this tradition; *Choephoroi* is a powerful example of how tragedy expresses through its dark presentation of oracles underlying fears and misgivings about prophecy itself, its ambiguity and its transmission through intermediaries (a theme introduced in *Agamemnon*).

We do not know if Aeschylus initiated this tradition of dark prophecies, but the tragic treatment of prophecy as problematic will become standard.¹¹ Well over half of Delphic

⁸ See Parke and Wormell (1956: 295ff.) on the dark Delphic prophecies of myth, generally associated with human sacrifice, or with marriage and children, but with the stock motive that the gods will grant a son or grandson but he will cause the death of the enquirer. They also note (303ff.) that 'a conventional motive found in legends was that the man who was guilty of killing a kinsman should seek purification at Delphi.'

⁹ Sommerstein, for example (1996: 374-75), suggested that the sequel may have involved Achilles being restored to life to live forever in bliss on the White Island or in the Elysian Fields – a version featured in the *Aethiopis* on which the play (*Phrygian Women*?) was probably based.

¹⁰ The oracle in *PV* (664ff.) although the play's authorship is disputed, also concerns exile, violent death and retribution.

¹¹ See Chapter 2, n. 64. See Bowie (2009: 210-211), who finds problematic oracles in Sophocles and Euripides prefigured by the *Oresteia* which probably to some extent inaugurated the trend.

oracles in extant tragedy are concerned with death.¹² Here it is part of Aeschylus' dramatic scheme – undermining Apollo and Delphic prophecy and promoting Athenian democratic ideology and process. How Aeschylus presents a particularly dark side to Apollo and Delphi will be shown further in the next two sections.

Apollo's oracle and the cycle of revenge

Kitto sees Apollo's promise to Orestes in *Choephoroi* as the only source of light in the darkness,¹³ and there are others who see Apollo's role as beneficial in this play.¹⁴ However, at 269-96 we will see how Apollo's role in the revenge cycle and this kind of vengeance itself are problematised. In this passage, where Apollo is mentioned for the first time,¹⁵ Orestes relates how the god has commanded him to commit matricide and has threatened him with the terrible things which will happen to him if he does not take this revenge for his father's murder:

οὔτοι προδώσει Λοξίου μεγασθενῆς
χρησμὸς κελεύων τόνδε κίνδυνον περᾶν,
κάξορθιάζων πολλά, καὶ δυσχειμέρους

¹² The oracles in Eur. and Soph. will be catalogued and discussed in Chapter 5.

¹³ Kitto (2002:84).

¹⁴ See Conacher (1987: 124), Bowden (2005: 54).

¹⁵ Although the opening lines of the MS are lost; surviving fragments reveal that Orestes there addresses Hermes and Zeus and may have mentioned Apollo. Winnington-Ingram (1933: 98) finds that the passage must have contained some reference to the divine command from Apollo. There is also the word 'Phoebus' at 32, contained in the MS but which translators do not usually include (see Collard, 2002 ad loc.). If 'dream-prophet' is interpreted as 'Phoebus', described as 'piercing and shrill', it would echo Ag. in adding an ominous note to Apollo's prophecy.

ἄτας ὑφ' ἧπαρ θερμὸν ἐξαυδῶμενος,
εἰ μὴ μέτειμι τοῦ πατρὸς τοὺς αἰτίους
τρόπον τὸν αὐτόν, ἀνταποκτεῖναι λέγων·
αὐτόν δ' ἔφασκε τῇ φίλῃ ψυχῇ τάδε
τείσειν μ' ἔχοντα πολλὰ δυστερπῇ κακά,
ἀποχρημάτοισι ζημίαις ταυρούμενον·
τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ γῆς δυσφρόνων μειλίγματα
βροτοῖς πιφαύσκων εἶπε, τὰς δ' αἰνῶν νόσους,
σαρκῶν ἐπαμβατῆρας ἀγρίαις γνάθοις,
λειχῆνας ἐξέσθοντας ἀρχαίαν θύσιν,
λευκάς δὲ κόρσαις τῇδ' ἐπαντέλλειν νόσωι,
ἄλλας τ' ἐφώνει προσβολὰς Ἑρινύων
ἐκ τῶν πατρώϊων αἱμάτων τελουμένας
ὀρῶντα λαμπρὸν ἐν σκότῳ νωμῶντ' ὀφρύν.
τὸ γὰρ σκοτεινὸν τῶν ἐνεργέων βέλος
ἐκ προστροπαίων ἐν γένει πεμπτωκότων
καὶ λύσσα καὶ μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος
κινεῖ ταρασσεῖ καὶ διωκάθει πόλεως
χαλκηλάτῳ πλάστιγγι λυμανθὲν δέμας.
καὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις οὔτε κρατῆρος μέρος
εἶναι μετασχεῖν, οὐ φιλοσπόνδου λιβός,
βωμῶν δ' ἀπείργειν οὐχ ὀρωμένην πατὴρ
μῆνιν, δέχεσθαι δ' οὔτε συλλύειν τινά,
πάντων δ' ἄτιμον κάφιλον θνήσκειν χρόνῳ
κακῶς ταριχευθέντα παμφθάρτῳ μόρῳι. (269-96)

Spectators would be likely to perceive the moral necessity (if not the legal necessity in fifth-century Athenian terms) for Orestes to avenge his father's death.¹⁶ However, Apollo's morality is questioned here by the manner in which he has ordered the murder to be carried out; Orestes must kill Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in the same way that they killed Agamemnon (274) which emphasises the moral similarity between this act and the act it avenges. Apollo cannot break the endless cycle of chthonic retribution associated with the Furies; in his command to Orestes he actually perpetuates it. The similarity of both murders

¹⁶ Athenian law forbade the taking of personal revenge against a murderer (Dem. 23.39). See Macleod (1982: 135).

and the unstoppable cycle of revenge are seen at 283-84; the Furies of his father will pursue Orestes if he does not commit matricide but, after the murder, the Furies of his mother pursue him anyway. And at 291-94 we see further what will happen if he fails: he may not attend libations or approach altars and ‘No-one either welcomes or shares his roof with such a man’ (trans. Collard), while at *Eumenides* 653-56 the Furies will threaten Orestes with the same fate when he *has* killed his mother.

Apollo’s considerable power and authority as god of the oracle *are* seen here (269). Orestes also says (558-59) that the god does not lie. However, Apollo is also morally undermined by his use of threats and the language in which they are expressed. From 279-90 and 295-96 he is quoted by Orestes using the visceral language which will also be a feature of his speeches in *Eumenides* and which is not used by other characters in the play except (as will be shown) in some notable similarities between Apollo and the Furies. It is impossible to say whether Apollo’s language here is unique as we have no contemporary examples of a dramatic Apollo with which to compare it,¹⁷ but it is characteristic exclusively of Aeschylus’ Apollo in extant sources. The god threatens Orestes with ‘much unpleasant evil’ and he will be ‘maddened like a bull in a punishment which will keep me from my property’.¹⁸ The oracle tells of the diseases which feed on the flesh with cruel jaws – ἀγρίαις γνάθοις (280) – and of λειχήνας (281) – a scab-like disease, here, among others, a punishment which would be

¹⁷ And see Parke & Wormell (1956: 303) who note how no ancient author gives anything which purports to be the original words of the oracular response.

¹⁸ Trans. Collard. Collard notes (2002 ad loc.) that the exact meaning of 275 (and the order of the lines) is unclear but, as positioned after 274, it must mean that Orestes’ anger at his lost inheritance (cf. 301) will be part of his mad desire to avenge.

inflicted by the Furies. At 295-96 we see how he would finally suffer, without honour or friends, 'an evil death of total extinction' (trans. Collard).

Apollo is not solely responsible for the matricide. Aeschylus' deployment of the tragic model of combined human/divine responsibility is expressed here through Orestes' declaration that other desires drive him on (299). However, Apollo's threats and the language in which they are expressed evoke sympathy for Orestes. They emphasise his impossible situation, expressing further the inescapability of Delphic vengeance and its questionable moral basis.

We see this underlined again at lines 900-2 where Pylades persuades Orestes to carry out Apollo's orders in what, these being his only lines, is a prominent speech. Pylades (because he is from Phocis) is often seen as a representative of Apollo, and these have been seen as the words of Apollo himself:¹⁹

ποῦ δαὶ τὸ λοιπὸν Λοξίου μαντεύματα
τὰ πυθόχρηστα, πιστά τ' εὐορκώματα;
ἅπαντας ἐχθροὺς τῶν θεῶν ἡγοῦ πλέον.

These passages suggest a threatening and morally ambivalent god and, indeed, some commentators have seen that Apollo is characterised very negatively here. Bierl finds that Apollo's speech shows the terrible dark side of his extreme, ambivalent nature; he is as cruel as the Furies and is, in fact, linked to them as he cannot deny his 'female side', while 'the horrible and uncivilised are an integral part of his ambivalence'.²⁰ Analysis of the passage at

¹⁹ See Knox (1972: 109).

²⁰ Bierl (1994: 88, 91).

269-96 has shown that Apollo's threats and language certainly suggest a questioning of the morality and justice of the oracle. The use of other dramatic techniques underlines this.

The Delphic cave

At 807-11 and 953-56 the Delphic sanctuary is described as a cave. The Delphic oracle was not in a cave in actuality but it was in some versions of its mythical past (Diodorus Siculus 16.26). There was a brief reference to the Acropolis cave at *Agamemnon* 55-59 to which these images are linked because it was a shrine to Apollo *Pythios* and was where the *Pythais* set off to Delphi.²¹ I argue that this link would be more obvious to the ancient audience than to a modern reader of the text. The caves in *Choephoroi* would evoke Delphi's mythical chthonic origins and suggest a dark side to Apollo and his similarity to the chthonic Furies and their blood vengeance.

In the first passage at 807-11 the lines are spoken by the Chorus who, calling on all gods to support Orestes' cause, turn to call on Apollo:

τὸ δὲ καλῶς κτίμενον ὦ μέγα ναίων
στόμιον, εὖ δὲ ἀνιδεῖν δόμον ἀνδρός,
καί νιν ἐλευθερίας φῶς
λαμπρὸν ἰδεῖν φίλοις
ὄμμασιν <ἐκ> δνοφερᾶς καλύπτρας.

First, the language will be examined to establish that the passage does refer to a cave. The word στόμιον (808) is usually translated as 'cave' or 'cavern'. It literally means 'mouth' (LSJ), but it is sometimes the mouth of a cave used as a grave (Sophocles, *Antigone* 1217)

²¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 46ff.

and hence a cave or vault as if it were the entrance to the lower world (LSJ cites the *Choephoroi* reference itself here). Garvie also comments that στόμιον perhaps has particular associations with the underworld, adding that it has even been suggested that the god called on was Hades, not Apollo, because of the underworld evocation.²²

There are other references which suggest underground and underworld connotations of the word. Pausanias (5.14.10) on the στόμιον at Olympia has ‘The altar to Themis is built at what they call the Mouth’ (in fact a chasm).²³ In Pindar (*Pythian* 4.43) we find χθόνιον ‘Αἰδα στόμα or ‘Hades’ mouth’, referring to the cave which was seen as an entrance to the underworld at Taenarum. Plato (*Republic* 615d-e) uses the word to refer to the mouth of a chasm in a passage about two souls passing between earth and the underworld.

As noted, the Delphic sanctuary was not actually a cave; the *adyton* where the oracle was situated was a sunken room in a temple. Some commentators have noted the tradition that there was a fissure or chasm in the floor of the *adyton* above which the Pythia sat on the tripod.²⁴ Garvie comments that it is now generally accepted that there was no such feature,²⁵

²² Garvie (1986 ad loc.). Collard (2002) translates στόμιον as ‘vault’ (and μυχὸν χθονός as ‘vale’ in the next passage, 953-56, discussed below), whereas I find that ‘underground’ associations are clearer in both passages. Collard does note though (ad loc.) that while ‘vault’ translates literally as ‘mouth’, i.e. the entry to a (large) interior, the allusion may be to the ‘cavern’ or chasm believed to lie beneath the oracular shrine and to ‘house’ the god’s power.

²³ Trans. Levi (1971).

²⁴ Tucker (1901) and Thomson (1938).

²⁵ Garvie (1986 ad loc.).

and Bowden notes that the excavators of the first half of the twentieth century found no evidence of a vent in the ground.²⁶ Recent geological work, however, has shown that there may have been two crossed fault lines in the area from which vapours could have risen.²⁷

Garvie finds στόμιον to be an artificial construction in the earth between the rock and the floor of the adyton, καλῶς κτίμενον (807) suggesting something man-made. He notes that Thomson and Rose believed that the *adyton* itself was the στόμιον and that later writers did describe it as being like a cave.²⁸ However, fault lines or any man-made gap under the floor of the *adyton* do not suggest somewhere μέγα or somewhere Apollo could ‘dwell’ (νοίω) and, as στόμιον means ‘mouth’, it suggests, rather than a room in a temple, an opening to somewhere underground. As there is no actual cave at the temple, it seems that a mythical cave and its associations are being evoked here. I argue that this suggests the mythic past, a chthonic female-controlled Delphi and that, as it is where Apollo dwells, it associates him and his justice with these forces to some extent.²⁹

This is underlined by the next reference:

τάνπερ ὁ Λοξίας ὁ Παρνασσίας

²⁶ Bowden (2005: 18).

²⁷ See Hale, et al, on geological evidence of a fault at Delphi (2001/2002/2003). See Piccardi (2001) on ‘active faulting’ at Delphi.

²⁸ Thomson (1938), Rose (1957-8).

²⁹ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 152) finds that, for Aeschylus, the relationship between chthonian and Olympian gods was a religious issue and that it raised a problem which could not be solved by a god whose own relationship to the chthonian world was so ambiguous.

μέγαν ἔχων μυχὸν χθονὸς ἐπωρθία-
ξεν ἀδόλως δόλια
βλαπτομέναν· χρονισθεῖσα δ' ἐποίχεται. (953-56)

The word in question here is μυχός which normally means innermost part, nook, corner or recess. In this passage it is sometimes taken to mean a valley,³⁰ and there are several other uses in tragedy which all suggest hollows or inner places of some kind.³¹ However, the usage here in *Choephoroi* is specifically μυχὸν χθονός (954) – underground chamber. We can compare a use in Hesiod (*Theogony* 119): Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῶι χθονός εὐρυοδείης (Tartarus is the deepest region of the underworld). The μυχός can be a vale or a man-made recess but as μυχὸν χθονός it must surely represent an underground chasm or cave.

This again suggests the evocation of an ancient Delphi. One of the stories of the mythical origins of the oracle was about a goatherd coming across a cave at the site and being given the gift of prophecy (Diodorus Siculus 16.26, as noted above).

Parke and Wormell describe a hole in the paving slab of the *adyton* through which, in the earlier days of the earth oracle, the priestess made contact with the goddess, suggesting that

³⁰ Garvie (1986 ad loc.) finds it is best taken as meaning the Pleistus valley at Delphi. Collard (2002) has 'the great inner vale of Parnassus.' Pind. *Pyth.* 10.8 also uses this word to describe a valley – ὁ Παρνασσίος μυχός – the vale in Parnassus.

³¹ There are other uses of μυχός in tragedy: *Cho.* 801; *Eum.* 39, 170, 180; Eur. *Andr.* 1265, *IA* 660, *Or.* 331. The word is also found at *Pyth.* 5.68-69.

she dwelt in an underground chasm.³² The existence of a former earth oracle is much disputed.³³ Whether it existed or not, Aeschylus uses the idea that the site was originally held by the Goddess Earth (Ge or Gaia) in the opening of *Eumenides* which explicitly relates the passing down of the oracle from Earth through to Apollo. Aeschylus' Delphi is now owned by an Olympian but its cave imagery strongly evokes the oracle of the distant past.

The connection between Apollo and these deities is underlined at the opening of *Eumenides* where the transfer of Delphic control to Apollo from chthonic deities is uniquely peaceful, suggesting a continuing process rather than a dramatic, violent takeover from chthonic control by Olympian. As discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 37), this is in particular contrast to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as noted by Clay, where there are no previous chthonic owners but the oracle is 'a uniquely Olympian institution'.³⁴ The *Hymn* also does not mention the Pythia who, as Clay notes, has chthonic origins and was connected with clefts, caverns and underground chambers. Both the previous chthonic owners of Delphi and the Pythia play a large part in the *Oresteia*, underlining Apollo's chthonic connections here and their thematic importance. We also see in the first of these passages the symbolic use of light and dark, here associated with the caves, and part of a pattern seen more widely in the trilogy.³⁵ If Apollo is said to dwell in an underground chasm and this relates him to the other underworld deities, the

³² Parke and Wormell (1956: vol. 1, 8).

³³ Garvie (1986 ad loc.).

³⁴ Clay (1994, esp. 29, 34).

³⁵ On imagery of dark and light in *Cho.* and the trilogy as a whole, see Conacher (1987: 121), Collard (2002: lviiff.).

Furies,³⁶ then the darkness of caves suggests moral darkness. Apollo shares attributes of the loathsome and impure Furies and there appears to be a relationship between the deities that is more complex than one of simple opposition. There are tensions, then, within the presentation of Apollo himself: the Olympian, male, god of light and of the young generation of gods is also associated to some extent with the old, female, dark chthonic powers. Zeitlin sees conflict in the *Oresteia* centred on tensions between male and female, exemplified by Apollo's conflict with the Furies.³⁷ In her two lists of qualities associated with each side, many of the characteristics in the Furies' list can in fact also be seen as elements of the representation of Apollo.

In the passage at 807-11, discussed above, we see these tensions between dark and light aspects of Apollo as he who dwells in the cave is called on to 'grant that the man's house may look up again in well-being/and he may see freedom's/brilliant [light] with welcoming eyes' (trans. Collard). Though Apollo dwells in a dark place he is still Phoebus, god of light, associated with Phoebe or 'bright one' (*Eumenides* 7-8), and he is Orestes' hope and light. It is interesting to note here that Apollo elsewhere in Aeschylus may actually have been a sun god. There are two fragments (23 and 24 *TGrF*) of the lost play *Bassarai*, second of the *Lycurgeia* trilogy. This play tells the story of Orpheus who rejects Dionysus, considers Helios, whom he addresses as Apollo, to be the greatest of gods and is destroyed by Dionysus for this.³⁸ There

³⁶ This argument builds on that of Winnington-Ingram (1983: 137) that 'Apollo appears to stand in strange association if not alliance with the chthonian world'.

³⁷ Zeitlin (1978, esp. 171).

³⁸ Gantz (1993: 87) is sceptical of the sun-god Apollo in *Bassarai* and in *Supp.* (see n. 39 below), noting possible textual corruption in the latter.

is also a possible reference to Apollo as a sun god in *Suppliants* (212-14).³⁹ The evidence is limited but if Apollo was already associated with the sun in the fifth century this would highlight further Aeschylus' presentation here of an Apollo with notably dark elements.

We might tend to see Olympian and chthonic deities as starkly opposing entities because of their obvious spatial opposition of upper and lower, suggesting also dark and light and life and death; but the chthonic does not only represent death – growth and new life come from the earth. Burkert observes that in cultic reality 'there remained a rich conglomerate of Olympian and chthonic elements'.⁴⁰ He comments that, in contrast, there was a very clear antithesis between upper and lower gods in Aeschylus; and there are some examples of this (*Persians* 229, 404; *Suppliants* 24, 154; *Agamemnon* 89). However, in *Choephoroi* we can observe that, as in cult, the Olympian Hermes and Zeus both have chthonic aspects (although see n. 40 on

³⁹ Burkert, (1985, p, 149) cites this reference in *Supp.* as evidence for Apollo as a sun god in the 5th century BCE. Simon (1983: 75) finds an earlier connection between Apollo and the sun in the precursor to Apollo which she believed existed in the Minoan-Mycenean pantheon and who may have been identical with the sun god, Helios. The sun-god Apollo of the Hellenistic period could have been a revival of this old tradition. Graf (2009: 151) believes that 'the identification of Apollo with the sun goes back to the 5th century'. Gantz (1993: 87) is sceptical about evidence before Eur. *Phaethon* (fr. 781) which he finds is the first sure identification of Apollo with the sun. Loraux (1990: 178, n. 31) finds Helios to be identified with Apollo in *Ion* (see 1439, 1550). Gantz (1993: 87) notes that Parmenides and Empedocles may have connected Apollo with the sun if a late source can be trusted (28A20DK=31A23DK).

⁴⁰ Burkert (1985: 202). In Hermione the festival of Demeter (the corn-giving goddess) is called *Chthonia* (Paus. 2.3-4) and, when sowing the seed, the farmer prays to chthonic Zeus and pure Demeter (Hes. *Op.* 465). One famous Minoan cave cult was of Eileithyia who was goddess of childbirth. Some Olympian gods have chthonic epithets, especially Demeter and Hermes, although when 'Chthonios' or 'Katachthonios' (*Il.* 9.457) is applied to the name of Zeus it more likely refers to Hades. Further on 'Olympian and Chthonic' see Burkert (1985: 199ff.).

chthonic Zeus). Hermes in the first line is 'Ερμῇ χθόνιε. At *Choephoroi* 382-85 there is the suggestion of an underworld Zeus as Orestes cries:

Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, κάτωθεν ἀμπέμπειν
ὑστερόποινον ἄταν
βροτῶν τλήμονι καὶ πανούργῳ
χειρί· τοκεῦσι δ' ὅμως τελεῖται.

Zeus in the *kommos*, as Winnington-Ingram comments, is both infernal and supernal.⁴¹

There is in fact a significant chthonic element in *Choephoroi*. Orestes uses the term κατέρχομαι (3) – return from exile – which is a pun on its literal meaning of 'descend'.⁴²

Electra calls on the underground powers at 123ff. (see also 354-59, 382-83). The chthonic element here also, as in cult, has life-giving properties, for example in the phrase 'by the fostering earth' – ὑπὸ χθονὸς τροφοῦ (66). In *Eumenides* new life will come from underground at Athens with the Furies (944ff.).

What is evidently unique to the *Oresteia*, however, is that Apollo, who seems exclusively Olympian in cult, has elements of the chthonic.⁴³ It is not suggested in Homer or Hesiod, and is actually suppressed in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*; this illustrates the importance of this aspect of Apollo in Aeschylus' vision, and that a particularly dark oracle would be experienced by the audience of this play.

⁴¹ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 139).

⁴² Conacher (1978 ad loc.).

⁴³ Rutherford (2001: 49) describes how the *paian* is felt to be incompatible with death partly because 'Apollo had no part in the chthonic sphere.'

In *Eumenides* the dark underworld Furies take on some of Apollo's upper world qualities and pray that the sun's light will bring benefits to the city (923-25). Dark and light, then, as each contains an element of the other, are used to suggest the complexity of the relationship between Olympian and chthonic, between old justice and new and, beyond this, between good and evil themselves, an example of how the forces of the play are not in simple opposition.

Apollo, god of ephebes

In the later stages of *Choephoroi*, Apollo's role shifts to that of Orestes' purifier and protector. Purification too is a Delphic function, but the Apollo/Orestes relationship also suggests that of mentor and ephebe. The discussion of this here is less directly related to the text as there is less textual evidence, but I argue that this relationship would evoke Apollo's ephebic association in cult, with its inherent ambivalence,⁴⁴ and his problematic presentation in this role in other literature.

The Chorus tell Orestes that Apollo will free him from the Furies' torments (1059-60), but the god is unable to do this and we begin to see his limitations in this protective role. In *Choephoroi* the ephebic role, like the oracular role, is presented as authoritative while being simultaneously undermined. The presentation of Apollo as an ephebic god draws on the liminality, and possible suggestions of threat, represented by the uncertain social status of ephebes in society,⁴⁵ these being qualities of Apollo by association with ephebes. I find that *Choephoroi* would also resonate with Apollo's particularly problematic association with

⁴⁴ See Bierl, Introduction above n. 12.

⁴⁵ Vidal-Naquet (1986: 107) notes that the ephebe 'both was and was not a member' of the *polis*.

young men in Homer. The ephebic Apollo in earlier literature and in cult will now be examined in turn, before a discussion of their use in *Choephoroi*.

Apollo is traditionally young in literature (and iconography).⁴⁶ Although, as noted, his role as an ephebic mentor is not developed in Homer, he does act as supporter of Hector (see Chapter 1, p. 33). His relationship with Orestes recalls this: both of these young men are epic heroes of royal blood while Apollo is formidable on their behalf but not, alone, able to protect them (and some commentators, such as Roberts, note that he leaves both abruptly;⁴⁷ see next chapter). Graf has noted, in fact, that Apollo's relationship with young men in Homer is particularly ambivalent as he is the god responsible for causing their deaths;⁴⁸ this adds ominous suggestions for Orestes in his association with Apollo here.

Apollo's association with young men in cult is not easy to explore because the evidence is limited. There is in fact some debate about Apollo's association with ephebes, and about the existence of the actual institution of the *ephebeia* itself in the fifth century. In the fourth century it was a two-year period of military training, the second half of which was spent at frontier posts or *peripoloi*. No hard evidence exists for the *ephebeia* before the 330s when

⁴⁶ See Graf (2009: 104-5). See also Pind. *Pyth.* 9.6 – 'Leto's long-haired son'. I would note that there are exceptions, as in examples of a bearded Apollo on 6th-century vases (Carpenter, 1994: 61-79).

⁴⁷ Roberts (1984: 89).

⁴⁸ See Graf quoted in Chapter 1, p. 31.

Epicrates introduced a law about it,⁴⁹ but it is usually seen as likely that some precursor to it existed in the fifth century.⁵⁰

It has become commonplace to see Apollo as an ephebic god, however,⁵¹ and there is evidence that he has some cultic association with young men. Apollo's *Delphinion* temple at Athens functioned mainly as a court, but was also where young Athenians were granted full citizenship.⁵² In myth the temple is where Aegeus recognises his ephebe son, Theseus, who has returned from his wanderings, and where he establishes him as his successor.⁵³ There is further evidence of Apollo's association with young men: it is a feature of his festivals, the Pyanopsia and the Thargelia,⁵⁴ while the Apollo *Lykeios* sanctuary outside the city walls was where young soldiers practised.⁵⁵ However, there are questions concerning Apollo's role in ephebic practice. He is not, for example, one of the seventeen deities included in the ephebic oath.⁵⁶ It seems likely that his was a more general association with young men, and there are

⁴⁹ The main source for its existence in the 4th century: Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 42. Evidence for pre-Lykourgan ephebic training: Xen. *Poroi* 4.52; Aeschin. *On the Embassy* 167; Dem. 19.303 (delivered 343 BCE) refers to Aeschines taking the ephebic oath. Thuc. mentions *peripoloi* at 4.67-68 and 8.92.

⁵⁰ See Siewert (1977), Winkler (1990, esp. 26ff.), Vidal-Naquet (1982: 106).

⁵¹ See Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 98-99), Harrison (1912: 439-44), Burkert (1975, 1985: 144-45), Versnel (1985-86: 313-15), Graf (1979, 2009: 103ff.).

⁵² See Graf (2009: 109ff.) on *Delphinios*.

⁵³ Paus. 1.19.1; Bierl (1994: 87), Burkert (1985: 26), Parker (2005: 436). See Plut. *Lives, Theseus* and Bowden (2005: 60) on the 'Apollonisation' of the Theseus myth. See also Graf (2009: 107-8, 109-10).

⁵⁴ See Parker (2005: 437), Graf (1979; 2009: 107-8), Bremmer (1983: 319), Wilson (2007: 157).

⁵⁵ Jameson (1980).

⁵⁶ 'I will not bring shame upon these sacred weapons nor will I abandon my comrade-in-arms....The following gods are witnesses: Aglaurus, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalios, Ares and Athena Areia, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone,

several variations on this view. Jameson believes Apollo to be a god of already initiated young men and that at Athens he had little connection with ephebic status.⁵⁷ Parker finds that Apollo is the god of male gatherings generally. He comments that it is generally supposed that Apollo is a patron of young men:⁵⁸ Apollo's capacity to 'make youths grow' (κουρίζειν), aided by the Nymphs, is one of the best-attested facets of his panhellenic cult persona.⁵⁹

There is limited evidence for Apollo's specific involvement in initiation. In cult the sacrifice of the hair was at the koureötis, the third day of the Apatouria which was the festival of the Ionian phratries.⁶⁰ However, Apollo does not seem to have been associated with the phratries or the Apatouria.⁶¹ Parker believes that Apollo is not actively involved in ephebic initiation because he has always been associated with the young boy: 'they need not approach him specifically, because he has long been their protector'.⁶²

If Apollo's role in ephebic initiation ceremony is uncertain, he is certainly in the fifth century generally perceived as of ephebic age himself (before the cutting of the hair) and he is clearly associated with young men. As such (and as Bierl has shown) he would carry the inherent

Heracles, the territory of the fatherland, the wheat, barley, vines, olive trees, and fig-trees.' (Tod, 1948, vol. 2, no. 204).

⁵⁷ Jameson (1980: 231-32).

⁵⁸ Parker (2005: 436, 428).

⁵⁹ Theophrastus' 'Man proud of Trifles' (*Char.* 21.3) takes his son to Delphi to cut a first lock of hair.

⁶⁰ Vidal-Naquet (1986: 109).

⁶¹ See Graf cited Chapter 1, n. 61. See also Parker (2005: 436).

⁶² Parker (2005: 436).

ambivalence of the role of adolescents in Athenian society, the liminal status of the not yet initiated who represent a possible threat to the *polis*.

In the *Oresteia* there is evidence to suggest that Apollo is both a projection of ephebes and an ephebic mentor. He is young himself and representative of the young generation of gods.⁶³ He is also a mentor: as the patron of Orestes, after the command, he will purify him and stand for him at the trial. Orestes addresses him as his σοφὸς διδάσκαλος (*Eumenides* 279) and there is the suggestion that he is his ἐξηγητής (in the use of ἐξηγέομαι at *Eumenides* 595, 609).

There are similarly suggestions of Orestes as an ephebe. In the *Oresteia* he could be said to go through initiation twice – after his father’s murder and after he kills his mother.⁶⁴ *Choephoroi* also echoes contemporary ephebic practice, the ceremonial cutting of the hair,⁶⁵ when Orestes says:

... πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον,
τὸν δεύτερον δὲ τόνδε πενθητήριον. (6-7)

Orestes’ ephebic status is also suggested by the use of specific language. Bierl points out how descriptions of him shift between boy and man.⁶⁶ In *Choephoroi* he is usually a boy: see παιδός (759), παῖ (896), τέκνων (757) and τέκνον (896, 910, 912, 922). When they find the lock of hair, the Chorus, asking who left it, say ‘Whoever is it – a man’s, or some slim-waisted girl’s?’ (169, trans. Collard). In *Eumenides* he is usually addressed as ἀνὴρ (316,

⁶³ See *Eum.* 150, 162, 490, 731, 778-79, 808-9.

⁶⁴ See Zeitlin (1978, esp. 160ff.).

⁶⁵ See Graf (2009: 103ff.) on the relationship between youth, hair-cutting and rivers.

⁶⁶ Bierl (1994: 85).

577) which may suggest a later stage in the process of initiation. This uncertainty about his age and even his gender identity suggests the liminal state of the ephebe. He is also ordered to use cunning – δόλῳι (*Choephoroi* 556) – in the murder. The trick or ἀπάτη was an aspect which may have been associated with ephebes.⁶⁷

The idea of initiation generally as a model in tragedy, especially whether this would have been at all evident to the original audience, has been questioned.⁶⁸ The *Oresteia*, however, presents a literal evocation of ephebic initiation – involving the exile, expected tasks, and the reintegration of a young man into society – and as such is an idea which I think spectators *would* pick up on in this play. Indeed, *Choephoroi* recontextualises the epic relationship of god and young man with considerable significance for the fifth-century *polis*. Vernant comments on the individual actor in tragedy (as opposed to the ‘collective being’ of the Chorus) who provides the individualised figure whose actions form the centre of the drama and who is seen as a hero from another age, always more or less alien to the ordinary condition of a citizen.⁶⁹ However, we could see in *Choephoroi* that Apollo and Orestes do not just have the relationship of god and individual hero but that Apollo must enable Orestes’ return to his social position as head of *oikos* and *polis*.⁷⁰ There was an example of this earlier: at line 277

⁶⁷ Vidal-Naquet (1986: 111ff.), although Dodd (2003: 74-75) questions the ἀπάτη as an ephebic characteristic; it is typical of Odysseus, for example, and he is not an ephebe.

⁶⁸ See Wright (2005: 355).

⁶⁹ Vernant (1981: 2).

⁷⁰ Cropp (on *IT*, 2000: 55) notes that the ephebic connection must have increased the ‘communal significance’ of the story of Orestes. Burian (1997: 191ff.) saw the rite of passage as one of the narrative elements of tragedy that adumbrate the great rituals of communal propitiation and therefore evoke the wellbeing of the community (192).

we saw the *lex talionis* applied to contemporary practical matters – Orestes’ loss of possessions:

ἀποχρημάτοισι ζημίαις ταυρούμενον.

At 301 we saw:

καὶ πρὸς πῖέζει χρημάτων ἀχηνία.

In *Choephoroi* Apollo in his ephebic role is authoritative but questions are raised about his morality in this role, underlining his presentation as god of the oracle, and there are also suggestions of his ineffectiveness. *Choephoroi* makes particular use of Apollo’s ephebic characteristics as a god of the outside and the distance, and as wolf-like, characteristics which become problematic in tragedy. Apollo as the wolf-god was discussed in *Agamemnon* and is recalled in *Choephoroi* (421-22) where Electra says she and Orestes are ‘wolf-like and savage’ (trans. Collard) – acting as agents of wolf-god Apollo in the murder.

The idea of a relationship between Apollo *Lykeios*, wolves and ephebes is pervasive in modern scholarship. Burkert (see above n. 51) sees *Lykeios* in the ephebic context. Versnel finds that the roots of Apollo’s remoteness are in the situation of the young men who retire into the outer world during their period of initiation and regress to a state of natural life, roaming the wilds like wolves with the concomitant rabid and uncivilised behaviour.⁷¹ Graf traces the ephebic aspect of Apollo back to an original function of the god as patron of a warrior society under the sign of the wolf.⁷² Gershenson finds that ‘As *Lykeios* surely [Apollo’s] sphere is first and foremost the life of the ephebe’.⁷³ As with the young man of the wild outskirts of the city, we

⁷¹ Versnel (1985-86: 315).

⁷² See Graf (1985; 2009: 123-24).

⁷³ Gershenson (1991: 129).

do not know how literally the wolf-like ephebe would be seen but it was clearly a pervasive and powerful idea and one that, in tragedy, expresses fearsomeness and destructiveness.

Apollo in his ephebic role is also further associated with the outside and the distance as his cult sites of the *Delphinion* and the *Lykeion*, both associated with young men, are situated outside of the city, as was ephebic initiation itself.⁷⁴ Tragic Apollo resonates with his traditional distance and it will become a markedly problematic aspect throughout tragedy. Apollo is often pointedly absent where he should be present or, as in *Eumenides*, is absent because he is replaced more effectively by someone else, usually Athena.

This lack of effectiveness is already becoming clear towards the end of *Choephoroi*. Bowden sees here that ‘the transgressor suffers but the dutiful ephebe who follows the oracle at whatever cost is offered ultimate safety’.⁷⁵ However, I would note that we can interpret from the text that Apollo’s effectiveness as a mentor is presented with distinct limitations. As the play built up to the murders, different forces were called upon in the *kommos* by Orestes, Electra and the Chorus: Destinies, Zeus, Justice (306-8), Agamemnon himself (315), chthonic forces (376), Earth and Darkness (399), but not Apollo. After the murders, towards the end of the play, we see:

τὸν πυθόμαντιν Λοξίαν, χρήσαντ’ ἐμοὶ

⁷⁴ See the association between the ephebe and the outside in Vidal-Naquet (1986). Polinskaya (2003: 85) notes that ephebic nature should not be taken too literally as actually meaning liminal – ephebes are liminal rather because of their role in Athenian society. Vidal-Naquet’s interpretation of the Athenian *ephebeia* is therefore best understood as a metaphoric model where the ephebes are *like* tricksters and *like* solitary hunters, the Athenian frontiers are *like*, not actually are, liminal spaces.

⁷⁵ Bowden (2005: 54).

πράξαντα μὲν ταῦτ' ἐκτὸς αἰτίας κακῆς
εἶναι, παρέντι δ' οὐκ ἐρῶ τὴν ζημίαν.
τόξωι γὰρ οὔτις πημάτων ἐφίξεται.
καὶ νῦν ὁρᾶτέ μ', ὥς παρσκευασμένος
ξὺν τῶιδε θαλλῶι καὶ στέφει προσίξομαι
μεσόμφαλόν θ' ἵδρυμα, Λοξίου πέδον,
πυρός τε φέγγος ἄφθιτον κεκλημένον,
φεύγων τόδ' αἶμα κοινόν· οὐδ' ἐφ' ἐστίαν
ἄλλην τραπέσθαι Λοξίας ἐφίετο. (1030-39)

Orestes increasingly calls on Apollo who emerges as the dominant force – as purifying god and protector (1030-32, 1034-39). However, we are reminded by Orestes (1032-33) and by the Chorus (1059-60) of the threats of punishment. This is not simply, as it has sometimes been seen, a progression from chthonic towards Olympian, towards purification, and the new justice of *Eumenides*. Conacher comments that the emphasis is on Apollo as purifier as opposed to Orestes' darker allies.⁷⁶ However, there is no clear-cut moral development. If Apollo is the Olympian god now exclusively turned to, it has been clearly established in this play that he is a god with a chthonic element. Tensions are seen in how the play has begun with Apollo having commanded Orestes to commit matricide and now ends with Orestes looking to Apollo for support and purification from the same act. Orestes has already doubted the god, asking 'Are not such oracles to be trusted?' (297, trans. Collard). The play ends with Orestes being tormented by the Furies whom Apollo cannot stop, echoing the questionable healing quality which was suggested in *Agamemnon*.

⁷⁶ Conacher (1987: 124).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the representation of Apollo in *Choephoroi* shifts from that in *Agamemnon*, in terms of the god's dramatic role and of the cult aspects evoked, but, at the same time, builds thematically on the earlier play. *Choephoroi* presents a rich dialogue with the religious context and new meaningful connections are made between tragedy and Athenian cult; Apollo, in his new roles, continues to be questioned. In *Eumenides*, characteristics of the god from both plays will be echoed as problematic aspects of Apollo in the 'contemporary' settings of Delphi and in the democratic trial at Athens.

Chapter 4: Apollo on the Aeschylean stage

Eumenides

Apollo in *Eumenides* becomes central to the dramatic action and appears on stage for the first time. Attention will be given in this chapter to performance aspects such as the god's entrances and exits and his physical appearance, and also to the language of his speeches. At the same time we will see how the associations made with elements in epic, myth and cult by which Apollo was characterised in the previous plays are echoed here in the creation of the god figure. We see the culmination of the role this figure plays in the themes of the trilogy and how Aeschylus uses the god in engaging with contemporary issues.

The characterisation and dramatic role of Apollo in this action are complex and, as noted in the chapter on *Agamemnon*, he has several opposing aspects. Some of his characteristics are clearly presented as beneficial: he is an Olympian, one of the new generation of gods, god of the oracle and representative of Zeus, a masculine ideal, and his 'client' wins his case at the trial. At the same time this play recalls his 'epic' characteristics from *Agamemnon* where he was destructive and vengeful. The associations of the god with the dark and chthonic and with blood vengeance in *Choephoroi* are also echoed here, as are the suggestions of a distant god in both plays.

In *Eumenides*, where Aeschylus' themes can be seen to engage to some extent with contemporary issues, these aspects of Apollo are presented as anachronistic or otherwise problematic, raising questions about his morality and effectiveness. Apollo will be

marginalised by an Athena whose qualities have more value for and relevance to the fifth-century *polis*. In its promotion of Athenian value systems, *Eumenides* challenges both the epic values and Delphic vengeance which Apollo here partly represents, although not in any straightforward way. Indeed the ambivalent Apollo figure itself in this trilogy expresses the moral complexities of justice and of the progression from the old vengeance to the new democratic system.

This chapter discusses six groups of passages, largely in the order in which they appear through the play, to show how Apollo's role develops. This begins with an ominous introduction of the god as we see echoes of his association with chthonic forces. Then we will see how aspects of staging and the speeches, both of Apollo and of other characters, contribute to the creation of a complex god figure, and to raising questions about his morality. The next section will show how Apollo's effectiveness also continues to be challenged by the uncertainties surrounding his purification of Orestes. In the climax of the trilogy, at the trial, we will see how questions are raised about Apollo's morality by the kind of language he uses and by his behaviour. We will see, finally, how he is marginalised by Athena and the Furies and excluded from the final stages of the action.

From Delos to Delphi, via Athens

In the Pythia's opening speech Apollo's introduction in the text reveals some suggestion of ensuing tensions:

πρῶτον μὲν εὐχῇ τῇδε πρεσβεύω θεῶν
τὴν πρωτόμαντιν Γαῖαν· ἐκ δὲ τῆς Θέμιν,

ἦ δὴ τὸ μητρὸς δευτέρα τόδ' ἔζετο
 μαντεῖον, ὡς λόγος τις· ἐν δὲ τῷ τρίτῳ
 λάχει, θελούσης, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν τινός,
 Τιτανὶς ἄλλη παῖς Χθονὸς καθέζετο
 Φοίβη, δίδωσιν δ' ἡ γενέθλιον δόσιν
 Φοίβῳ· τὸ Φοίβης δ' ὄνομ' ἔχει παρώνυμον.
 λιπὼν δὲ λίμνην Δηλίαν τε χοιράδα,
 κέλσας ἐπ' ἄκτας ναυπόρους τὰς Παλλάδος,
 ἐς τήνδε γαῖαν ἦλθε Παρνησοῦ θ' ἔδρας. (1-11)

Aeschylus creates an Athenian connection for Apollo here in that the god's mythical route from Delos to Delphi is described unusually, possibly uniquely, as via the city (9-11). As noted above (Chapter 2, n. 42) the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* traces the more common version of this route (186-206, 216-86). The Athenian connection may be underlined further at 13 where Hephaestus' sons, κελευθοποιοί or builders of roads, and identified by the scholion as Athenians, are said to have conveyed Apollo on his route.¹ As well as myth, this passage also draws on Athenian cult aspects: there is a custom mentioned in the scholion on 14 that when a sacred delegation went to Delphi it was preceded on the road by men carrying axes (see Chapter 2, p. 73).

This Athenian connection may seem to prefigure an important role for Apollo in this play's Athenian setting, but later he will be marginalised in importance by the Athenian goddess herself. We begin to see in this same passage suggestions of why this will happen. At lines 1-8 the Pythia describes the chthonic succession of power at Delphi. Unlike in other versions of the myth it is a peaceful transition to Apollo, given as a gift (by Phoebe) in

¹ Athenians believed themselves to be descended from Erichthonios, son of Hephaestus and Earth. See Pind. *Pae.* VIII Rutherford = fr. 52.65-71 SM. See Podlecki (1992 ad loc.). Bowie (1993: 15-16) notes that the Athenians thus play a crucial role in the Delphic succession myth.

fact.² Scholars have generally seen this as suggesting a beneficial association for the god,³ but the absence of a violent takeover suggests continuity as much as change.

The handing down of power at Delphi through a chthonic female line here contrasts notably with the male-dominated Delphi of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* where there is no Gaia and no Pythia (Gaia's priestess) and where autochthonous elements are suppressed.⁴ In this *Hymn* nothing exists at Delphi before Apollo. The version in *Eumenides*, with a peaceful transition through female earth powers to Apollo, thus seems to highlight again the god's chthonic connections and to associate him with older forms of justice which in this play are to be superseded.

Apollo on the stage

Certain aspects of staging, particularly the nature of Apollo's entrance, combined with the language of his early speeches and the speeches of other characters, suggest a god with opposing characteristics and one who plays an enigmatic role in the responsibility for events. In *Eumenides*, aspects previously reported or described are given stage reality – the binding of Orestes, the trial. This is also true of Apollo: the god whom Cassandra addressed as her destroyer, and whose violent threats Orestes reported, is here seen carrying a bow

² See Bowie (1993: 15), Conacher (1987: 174), Collard (2002, on 7-9). In the schol. to *Eum.* we find a violent account of the takeover at Delphi attributed to Pind. fr. 55 (SM).

³ See Conacher (1987: 139), Collard (2002 ad loc.), Kitto (2002: 87), Podlecki (1992 ad loc.). Zeitlin (1978: 163) presents a gender-focused slant on the transfer of Delphic power.

⁴ As noted by Clay; see Chapter 1, p. 37.

and using aggressive and confrontational language and behaviour against the Furies. Such features of the god from the previous plays become highly problematic here, limiting his authority and his relevance in the context of a democratic trial.

Regarding Apollo's entrance and how it might have been perceived by spectators, as with all aspects of staging there is actually little about which we can be certain. Lattimore's stage direction states that 'The Doors of the temple open and show Orestes surrounded by the sleeping Furies, Apollo and Hermes beside him'.⁵ However, there are various speculations on the arrangement of this opening tableau and on where Apollo appears, be it the roof of the *skēnē*, through the *skēnē* doors or on the *ekkyklēma*.⁶ One particularly convincing version, because it underlines themes found in the text, is the suggestion by Rehm that in the opening scene the temple interior is represented in the orchestra itself, with the *omphalos* centre-stage.⁷ The Pythia's description of the Furies would still be powerful as most of the audience would not be able to see them clearly anyway. Later this same space represents Athens, and Rehm comments that the placing of the cult image of

⁵ Lattimore (1953)

⁶ See various versions in Taplin (1977: 369ff.), Brown (1982: 28-29), Sommerstein (1989: 94), Collard (2002: xlv), Meineck's stage direction (1998), Conacher (1987: 175), Pickard-Cambridge (1968: 107ff.), Bowie (2009: 224), Mitchell-Boyask (2009: 49ff.), West (1990: 264-69). Arnott (1962: 81) notes the schol.: 'The machinery revolves to reveal what is going on in the shrine. A tragic spectacle is seen; Orestes is still holding the bloody sword, with the Furies surrounding him.' I note that this could refer to a later performance. See Arnott (81ff.) further on problems with the schol.'s comments.

⁷ Rehm (2002: 90-91).

Athena in the same position as the *omphalos* at Delphi emphasises the shifting of Orestes' dependence away from Apollo and his oracle onto Athena and Athens.

Another aspect we might consider is Apollo's physical appearance. About this we are told nothing in the text, but some scholars have made assumptions. There is, for example, no textual evidence for Kitto's observation that 'In the first part of the *Eumenides* there is indeed a radiance that plays around Apollo; there is purity, beauty, order' nor for his being 'the radiant god of Delphi' who 'in all his majesty' 'has been aptly compared with the nearly contemporary Apollo in the pediment at Olympia'.⁸ Similarly there is no textual evidence for the 'dazzling' Apollo which Conacher finds here.⁹ Such observations seem to be based on prior assumptions about Apollo's nature, on aspects of the god as a divinity of purity, order and harmony which are found in Plato,¹⁰ are more typical of the fourth-century god, and have been a major influence on ensuing perceptions of him. Views that Apollo would be dressed in white seem also to be based on extra-textual information, that is, on vase paintings of the god, or of the play itself.¹¹ Vase paintings of myths in fact have a complex relationship with their dramatic versions. We do know from the text that the

⁸ Kitto (2002: 92).

⁹ Conacher (1987 ad loc.).

¹⁰ See Introduction, n. 4.

¹¹ Sommerstein (1996: 228). Mitchell-Boyask (2009: 42) finds that Apollo must have appeared in white as 'iconography invariably represents him with pure white vestments' and Aeschylus needs him to be instantly recognisable. I find it hardly likely that an audience would not recognise Apollo here in whatever costume. Taplin (2007: 62-63) discusses a vase which portrays Apollo purifying Orestes, by the *Eumenides* painter (390-380 BCE), one of five showing this scene. Apollo is actually wearing a patterned robe here.

Furies are dressed in black or dark clothing and these comments may assume too straightforward a contrast;¹² this assumption is also found in scholars' discussions of other aspects of Apollo and the Furies and it is one which this thesis questions.

We can perhaps establish, then, that at the opening of the play the audience would see Apollo presented as a powerful god – possibly literally centre stage – in his own realm of Delphi. This would emphasise the shift to Athena's dominance as the scene moves to Athens. Sourvinou-Inwood comments on Apollo's stage appearance that 'By this time, then, the audience's perception of the god is as a representation of the god they worship in cult',¹³ but it may be a stage moment rather more layered with different realities than this suggests. Valakas comments on the Pythia's opening speech that details of recognisable elements of cult and myth 'essentially describe the Pythia's world in space and time: it is a theatrical 'reality' both like and unlike the mythical world of poetic narratives and the 'real' world of the spectators' experience'.¹⁴ This is also applicable here. The dramatic representation of Apollo's Delphi does relate to the spectators own reality in the sense that they know of it through the sending of Athenian delegations, but the Delphi of *Eumenides* is just as much the dark mythic place of which the audience has been reminded in the Pythia's opening speech.

¹² The Furies are described as black creatures at *Ag.* 462-63; *Eum.* 52. At *Cho.* 1049 Lattimore (1953) has 'black', Podlecki (1992) comments that they are wearing the grey chitons associated with mourning, Collard (2002) has 'dark clothing'. At *Eum.* 353 the Furies say they cannot wear 'all-white' clothing.

¹³ Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 235).

¹⁴ Valakas (2009: 183).

At lines 64-84, in our earliest example of a speech by Apollo in drama, we see how the god presents himself. He comes out of his temple, addressing Orestes:

οὔτοι προδώσω, διὰ τέλους δέ σοι φύλαξ
ἐγγὺς παρεστὼς καὶ πρόσωθ' δ' ἀποστατῶν
ἐχθροῖσι τοῖς σοῖς οὐ γενήσομαι πέπων.
καὶ νῦν ἀλούσας τάσδε τὰς μάργους ὁραῖς·
ὑπικωι πεσοῦσαι δ' αἱ κατάπτυστοι κόραι,
γραῖαι παλαιαὶ παῖδες, αἷς οὐ μείγνυται
θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε,
κακῶν δ' ἕκατι κάγένοντ', ἐπεὶ κακὸν
σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός,
μισήματ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων.
ὁμῶς δὲ φεῦγε, μηδὲ μαλθακὸς γένη·
ἐλῶσι γάρ σε καὶ δι' ἠπείρου μακρᾶς
βιβῶντ' ἀν' αἰεὶ τὴν πλανοστιβῇ χθόνα
ὑπὲρ τε πόντον καὶ περιρρύτας πόλεις.
καὶ μὴ πρόκαμνε τόνδε βουκολούμενος
πόνον· μολῶν δὲ Παλλάδος ποτὶ πτόλιν
Ἴζου παλαιὸν ἄγκαθεν λαβὼν βρέτας·
κάκεϊ δικαστὰς τῶνδε καὶ θελκτερίους
μύθους ἔχοντες μηχανὰς εὐρήσομεν
ὥστ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν σε τῶνδ' ἀπαλλάξαι πόνων.
καὶ γὰρ κτανεῖν σ' ἔπεισα μητρῷον δέμας. (64-84)

Here it is the discrepancies between what Apollo says and what is suggested about him in other ways which continues to undermine his morality. He presents himself as in control (64-67) but he is not entirely – Orestes leaves still pursued by the Furies and must go to Athens and appear before its judges to win freedom. Athenian superiority is asserted even as Apollo asserts himself. The purifying god comments on the loathsome Furies from ‘the evil dark of Tartarus under the earth’ (72, trans. Collard) but, in the Pythia’s speech above,

we have just been reminded of Delphi's own chthonic past – Apollo's by association.¹⁵ We do hear of the loathsomeness of the Furies elsewhere (45-57), and the Pythia has told us that Apollo will cleanse the temple of them (59-63), but Apollo's own language is less than pure – μίγνυμι (69), for example, is often used sexually.¹⁶ Adding to the complexity here is the presentation of old and young; Apollo, as we have seen earlier, is a young god with elements of the old while here the Furies are ancient children– παλαιαὶ παῖδες (69).

Speeches by other characters combine with those by Apollo to express Aeschylus' version of the tragic model of combined divine/human responsibility. The Furies consistently put all the blame for the matricide on Apollo. At 199 he is οὐ μετὰίτιος – not an accomplice but wholly responsible. Apollo admits his responsibility at 579-80: ...αἰτίαν δ' ἔχω / τῆς τοῦδε μητρὸς τοῦ φόνου (as well as at 84 and 203-5). Orestes, when the Chorus have asked 'And at whose persuasion and by whose design?' replies that Apollo ordered it – τοῖς τοῦδε θεσφάτοισι. μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι (594) – 'By the oracles of Apollo here; he is my witness for this.' (trans. Collard. Collard believes Apollo too is on trial in *Eumenides*, see further below).

¹⁵ Apollo's remarks here appear to conflate chthonic earth with the deeper Tartarus. These are normally seen as separate spheres in literature, and Apollo may be giving the Furies an even darker aspect than they normally have.

¹⁶ Hogan (1984 ad loc.) comments that after 'lewd' (67) [μάργος] and 'maidens' (68) [κόραι], Apollo enjoys a coarse *double entendre*.

However, at 465 Orestes had said καὶ τῶνδε κοινῇ Λοξίας ἐπαίτιος, suggesting that Apollo shares responsibility, and in *Choephoroi* (299) we heard him declaring that he had his own reasons for the revenge. This is our first example in tragedy of how Apollo in his role as god of the oracle, the medium of communication between gods and humans, is often the focus for expressing the complexities of divine/human relations (we will see further examples in *OT* and in the particularly ambivalent presentation of the matricide command in Sophocles' *Electra*).

After Clytemnestra's ghost has appeared and the Chorus have assembled (142-77) to speak of the wrong done to them by Apollo who has 'stolen' Orestes away (153), the god appears and confronts them. Here we see an even stronger example of Apollo's visceral and aggressive language, the nature of which echoes the threatening god described by Orestes in *Choephoroi*:

ἔξω, κελεύω, τῶνδε δωμάτων τάχος
χωρεῖτ', ἀπαλλάσσεσθε μαντικῶν μυχῶν,
μὴ καὶ λαβοῦσα πτηνὸν ἀργηστὴν ὄφιν
χρυσηλάτου θώμιγος ἐξορμώμενον
ἀνῆις ὑπ' ἄλγους μέλαν' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἀφρόν,
ἐμοῦσα θρόμβους οὖς ἀφείλκυσας φόνου.
οὔτοι δόμοισι τοῖσδε χρίμπεσθαι πρέπει,
ἀλλ' οὗ καρανιστῆρες ὀφθαλμωρύχοι
δίκαι σφαγαί τε, σπέρματός τ' ἀποφθορᾷ
παίδων κακοῦται χλοῦνις, ἥδ' ἀκρωνίαι
λευσμοί τε, καὶ μύζουσιν οἰκτισμὸν πολὺν
ὑπὸ ῥάχιν παγέντες. ἄρ' ἀκούετε
οἷας ἐορτῆς ἔστ' ἀπόπτυστοι θεοῖς
στέργηθρ' ἔχουσαι; πᾶς δ' ὑφηγεῖται τρόπος
μορφῆς· λέοντος ἄντρον αἱματορρόφου
οἰκεῖν τοιαύτας εἰκός, οὐ χρηστηρίοις
ἐν τοῖσδε πλησίοισι τρίβεσθαι μύσος.

χωρεῖτ' ἄνευ βοτῆρος αἰπολούμεναι·
ποίμνης τοιαύτης δ' οὔτις εὐφιλῆς θεῶν. (179-97)

Within Aeschylus, as noted in Chapter 3, this kind of language is uniquely characteristic of Apollo. Homer's Apollo is aggressive but does not use language of this obscene register.¹⁷ Commentators of the early twentieth century seemed shocked by Apollo's language and behaviour in *Eumenides*.¹⁸ Its unusual nature and power are still noted: Taplin comments that 'it is clear there are places when Aeschylus turns to ruder language, the language of invective and even obscenity. Apollo's attacks on the Furies in *Eumenides* 179ff. are an extreme example'.¹⁹ Apollo's language may even associate him with the barbarian, again a reminder of his Trojan role in *Agamemnon*.²⁰ In lines 187-88 – ἀποφθορᾶι / παίδων κακοῦται χλοῦνις, ἥδ' ἀκρωνιαί – are usually taken to refer to castration.²¹ Of lines 186-90 generally, Sommerstein comments that these are typically Persian practices, unknown or very rare among Greeks.²² Apollo is of course describing the Furies' brand of

¹⁷ Apollo's language in Homer can be harsh; see his stark warning to Patroclus at *Il.* 16.707-9. There is also an example of coarse banter in the god's exchange with Hermes at *Od.* 8.320ff. His language in Homer is never as strong as that in Aeschylus, however.

¹⁸ Livingstone (1925: 121) commented on Apollo's 'deplorable bad manners' and that there is 'of justice, grace, of equity, of higher spiritual conceptions not, a trace' Croiset (1928: 100) found the need to defend Apollo's language which 'nous étonne, nous scandalise presque...'

¹⁹ Taplin (2005: 243).

²⁰ Rabinowitz (2008: 40) notes that 'The Trojans who were not noticeably ethnically different from the Hellenes in Homer, were rendered 'orientals' in the 5th-century Parthenon sculptures.'

²¹ As in Collard's translation, and also by Hogan (1984) and Sommerstein (1989).

²² Collard (2002, on 186-90) calls them 'a collection of grisly punishments and tortures both barbarian and Greek.' See *Hdt.* 3.69, 118, 154; 9.112.

justice, but we have already seen his association with this justice and it is *his* language. At 644-48 we see a further vivid example:

ὦ παντομισῇ κνώδαλα, στύγη θεῶν,
πέδας μὲν ἄν λύσειεν, ἔστι τοῦδ' ἄκος
καὶ κάρτα πολλὴ μηχανὴ λυτήριος·
ἄνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὴν αἶμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις
ἄπαξ θανόντος, οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις.

Apollo's remarks have been seen to be particularly offensive and even beneath the conventional 'dignity' of tragedy. Sommerstein comments that calling humans or divine beings beasts – κνώδαλα (644) – is the language of the satyr play or comedy.²³ It is only the Furies themselves whose language in places is similar to that of Apollo (compare 184 with 264-65, and 647 with 979-80) from which we might infer a suggestion that they are similar in other ways – in their morality and their idea of justice. The aggressiveness of the language is reflected in the notion of violent action as Apollo threatens to use his bow against the Furies at 180-81 (see also 676-77, if this is spoken by Apollo, and it certainly seems more likely to be said by the archer-god than the Chorus²⁴).

²³ Sommerstein (1989: 204). See, for example, *Cyc.* 624: σιγᾶτε πρὸς θεῶν, θῆρες, ἡσυχάζετε. See also, on *Eum.* 660, Sommerstein comments that θρώισκω in its sexual sense and its synonym θόρνυμαι are at home in the satyr play, and in zoology. In *Hdt.* 3.109.4 θόρνυμαι describes serpents. Sommerstein finds that it 'strikes a remarkably bestial note' in *Eum.* See later discussion on the passage in which this word appears.

²⁴ Lattimore (1953) and Collard (2002) have it by the Chorus, Winnington-Ingram (1983: 219) and Sommerstein (1989) by Apollo.

Athena's conciliatory tone is in marked contrast (405-14, 794ff, 824ff, 848ff.); at 413-14 she may even be criticising Apollo when she says 'But to speak ill of people at hand who give no cause for blame, is to assume a right far distant from justice.' (trans. Collard). The new court will rise above this kind of invective and personal attack. Sidwell, who argues against the common perception of Apollo's ambivalence in *Eumenides*, believes that the god's attitude to the Erinyes is harsher than Athena's but basically in agreement.²⁵ I find that this does not take sufficiently into account the unusual nature of this language.

Having seen how stage action and language have been deployed to raise questions about Apollo's morality, we will see next new ways in which his effectiveness also continues to be challenged.

Apollo purifies Orestes?

In *Eumenides* (85-87) Orestes reveals his concern about Apollo's ability to protect him, and the representation of his purification by Apollo suggests he is right to be concerned as it is highly ambivalent in its location and timing. This may suggest further the element of ineffectiveness in the god already seen in *Choephoroi* where he was unable to protect Orestes from the Furies. Here it underlines the need for Athens and a democratic trial to provide resolution.

²⁵ Sidwell (1996: 48).

At the opening of the play the Pythia makes her speech and then enters the temple. She comes out having seen Orestes covered in blood (42). Apollo and Orestes appear and the god sends Orestes to Athens. The Furies pursue Orestes by a trail of blood to Athens (245). Orestes is pure by the time he arrives (237).

Scholars have not been in agreement on the question of exactly when and where Orestes is purified. It is not certain that it actually takes place at Delphi as the text is open to debate.²⁶ It is also not certain when it happens. Conacher, for example, notes that this purification, if performed at Delphi, must have taken place before the play opens because Apollo sends Orestes away from Delphi during the prologue (74ff.).²⁷ However, we could argue that the description of Orestes at 40-42 as having blood on him and carrying a dripping sword suggests that he is not already purified. Sidwell's explanation of this is that the Pythia sees the pig's blood which is being used in the purification.²⁸ The audience would see Apollo holding the piglet and a laurel bough. The Pythia did not see him and so misinterprets the scene. I again note that it would perhaps be unlikely for Orestes to be carrying a sword while being purified from the crime he committed with it, but it is not an aspect about

²⁶ See arguments for its being at Delphi: Sommerstein (1989: 131), Conacher (1987: 179-8). Brown (1982: 30-32) finds that the purification does not take place at Delphi as the audience is not told that it does and that we must seriously consider that lines 282ff. and 578ff. are spurious and from a revised version. Dyer (1969) also finds the purification did not take place at Delphi in *Eum.*, nor in actuality.

²⁷ Conacher (1987: 148).

²⁸ Sidwell (1996: 54-55): in practice the Priest would hold a young pig over the head of the person to be purified and cut its throat so that the blood dripped on the man's head and hands. See Aesch. fr. 182, Burkert (1985: 80-81), Parker (1983: 370-74). See also Zeitlin (1978: 165).

which we can be certain. Podlecki notes that Apollo's purification of Orestes was foretold by the Chorus at *Choephoroi* 1059-60 and that later Apollo will acknowledge that he was Orestes' purifier (578, although see Brown that this line may be spurious, n. 26). He suggests that, as the Pythia's description (40-42) shows that Orestes is not purified, there must be a slip on the part of the dramatist.²⁹

The issue here is one of stage conventions and the question of whether dramatic time schemes were always consistent. Perhaps the audience were not expected to make anything of this, or we might consider that the purification did take place on stage in some kind of 'dumb show'. Revermann finds that the purification is treated somewhat 'opaquely' and notes the possibility of textual corruption with some reference to purification having been omitted, but he also believes the possibility of unindicated dumb show must be considered here.³⁰ He argues for the visibility of the purification on the grounds of its 'immense theatrical suitability'. I think we should also consider that it was not part of the stage action and that its presentation was in fact intentionally ambivalent. This seems particularly likely in the light of 235ff. where we see that Orestes has been purified *on his way* to Delphi, and that the Furies have followed him to Athens by a trail of blood (245) which again suggests that a complete purification has not taken place at Apollo's sanctuary.³¹

²⁹ Podlecki (1992 ad loc.).

³⁰ Revermann (2006: 56ff.). See further his discussion of where in the text it may have taken place (58).

Sidwell (1996: 55) notes that it would have to be some kind of dumb show as participants in such a ceremony were not allowed to speak to one another.

³¹ Both also noted by Revermann (2006: 56-57) among others.

The raising of questions about Apollo's effectiveness on behalf of Orestes would be thematically consistent, so it is a matter of whether we decide for this or for the theatrically compelling. It is also possible that purification of Orestes with blood from a pig may have been considered too graphic to be shown on stage in 458 but that it was introduced later. Certainly there are several representations of the scene on vases from the fourth century (see above, n. 11), although this is not conclusive evidence that it was a feature of performances even then.

I find it likely that at the first performance the purification was presented ambivalently as part of the dramatic scheme,³² functioning to undermine further Apollo's effectiveness and the need for Orestes to go to Athens to complete the process, as we continue to see how Athena and Athens are privileged over Apollo and Delphi.

The trial at the Areopagus

The scene of Orestes' trial (574-777) is the climax of the trilogy and of Apollo's dramatic role. Examination of the trial scene here will include stage matters – Apollo's sudden entrance and how far we can assume the audience would infer meaning from this. We will also see how the play draws on actual Athenian trial procedure, the effect of Apollo's much-discussed language and behaviour at the trial, and how, in his confrontation with the Furies, the gender conflict of the trilogy comes to a head.

³² Other commentators who see the purification as deliberately vague: Winnington-Ingram (1983: 146), Taplin (1977: 383), Sidwell (1996: 45).

Apollo's second entrance is unannounced, which is unique as far as we know in tragedy, and the fact that he interrupts Athena's speech is unusual and somewhat awkward.³³ The question is whether a point is being made here in the breaking of dramatic conventions, and the problem is that we are not even sure such conventions *are* being broken as there are doubts surrounding the text. Some scholars suggest ways in which this entrance may have been staged;³⁴ others have seen it as so extraordinary that it must be explained by textual corruption.³⁵ The unobtrusiveness of Apollo's entry has been seen, by those who accept the soundness of the text, as quite damning of the god.³⁶ The most we can conclude is that, if the text is sound, the sudden unannounced entrance *is* an extraordinary feature and would most likely have been perceived as significant by the audience.³⁷ It would have been another way, along with Apollo's language, of suggesting that his behaviour is inappropriate in a civic context (see similarly on his exit later).

³³ As seen by Sommerstein (1989: 189). Podlecki (1992: 209-10) finds that the main reason for the delay of the speech is to create suspense. Winnington-Ingram (1983: 148-50) notes that Athena's speech about *thesmoi* (681ff.) may have preceded the entry of Apollo. Indeed, Collard (2002, on 571-73) notes how some editors transfer 681-710, Athena's speech 'instituting' the court to follow Apollo's entrance at 573 so as to remove the apparent awkwardness implicit in the MSS order.

³⁴ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 148), Meineck (1998: 141, n.).

³⁵ Taplin (1977: 400-1) finds that Apollo's entry must be at 574. He suspects considerable disruption and cutting of the text including Athena's inaugural speech. This would be in a lacuna between 572 and 574 and would have included Apollo's entrance.

³⁶ As in Sommerstein (1989: 189). Mitchell-Boyask (2009: 73) finds rather that an announcement of Apollo's arrival is unnecessary as he has appeared earlier.

³⁷ Note Revermann (2006: 36): 'There is [...] no meaningless sign on stage [...] When an actor, for instance, enters in silence, the audience will at least initially assume that the silence is meaningfully engineered...'

Once Apollo is on stage, his role at this trial is uncertain. He appears to be acting as Orestes' advocate – καὶ ξυνδικήσων αὐτός (579). As Podlecki notes, this was 'originally...a man who was ready for reasons of family or friendly relations to speak in court on a litigant's behalf'.³⁸ It seems strange to be both witness – καὶ μαρτυρήσων ἦλθον (576) – and advocate, although apparently this was possible in the Athenian legal system.³⁹ Sommerstein points out, however, that while καὶ ξυνδικήσων αὐτός (579) does have the normal meaning of 'to be advocate', the emphatic αὐτός suggests 'to stand trial with him'.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Orestes appeals to Apollo, asking him to judge – κρῖνον (613). This has been seen as unusual. Sommerstein notes that it is at first sight surprising that he asks his witness to judge his action.⁴¹ He comments that Orestes is hoping the jury will accept Apollo as the proper judge of his rightness or wrongness. I note that it could also suggest Orestes' limited viewpoint; it would be clear to the spectators that the involved and partial Apollo is not a judge and that the 'impartial' Athena is. Orestes' use of the word here may even underline this and the fact that the personal relationship between them defines and limits Apollo's role. Since his first mention in *Agamemnon* Apollo has been marginal to wider questions of justice. He is certainly too 'involved' to be a judge, but suggestions of his sharing guilt with Orestes also undermine his position as

³⁸ Podlecki (1992: 207-8).

³⁹ Podlecki (1992: 208 quoting Bonner and Smith, 1930: 124).

⁴⁰ Sommerstein (1989 ad loc.). Indeed Collard (2002, on 579) finds that Apollo is as much on trial here as Orestes.

⁴¹ Sommerstein (1989 ad loc.).

both witness and advocate. The overall effect here is one of some uncertainty about the god's role.

Apollo's arguments against the Furies at the trial have been much discussed; critics have traditionally commented on their weakness.⁴² I find that there is not a great deal to add to existing work on this but, in summary, we see here the culmination of the theme of gender conflict, Apollo's patriarchal role being both asserted and undermined. We also see him still associated with violence, as clever rather than wise, and as the one-sided supporter of Orestes, but unable to move beyond conflict. In all of these aspects Athena will transcend him and enable progression. These elements can all be seen in this passage:

οὐ γάρ τι ταῦτ' ἄνδρα γενναῖον θανεῖν
διοσδότοις σκήπτροισι τιμαλφούμενον,
καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς γυναικός, οὐ τι θουρίοις
τόξοις ἐκηβόλοισιν ὥστ' Ἀμαζόνος,
ἀλλ' ὡς ἀκούσῃ, Παλλὰς οἳ τ' ἐφήμενοι
ψήφῳ διαιρεῖν τοῦδε πράγματος πέρι.
ἀπὸ στρατείας γάρ νιν ἡμποληκότα
τὰ πλεῖστ' ἄμεινον εὐφροσιν δεδεγμένη
< >
δροίτῃ περῶντι λουτρὰ κάπῃ τέρματι
φᾶρος περὲσκήνωσεν, ἐν δ' ἀτέρμονι
κόπτει πεδῆσας ἄνδρα δαιδάλῳ πέπλῳ.
ἄνδρὸς μὲν ὑμῖν οὗτος εἴρηται μῶρος
τοῦ παντοσέμνου, τοῦ στρατηλάτου νεῶν·
τὴν δ' αὖ τοιαύτην εἶπον, ὡς δηχθῇ λεώς,
ὅσπερ τέτακται τήνδε κυρῶσαι δίκην. (625-39)

Apollo's argument, central to his case, is that the murder of Agamemnon is morally worse than that of Clytemnestra because he is a man and is killed by a woman, that this is morally

⁴² Livingstone (1925: 121): 'Apollo's arguments are as bad as his manners'. See recent comments criticising Apollo's performance: Bowie (2009: 225), Mitchell-Boyask (2009: 51), Johnston (2009: 224).

exacerbated by his status and by the particular way she kills him. His argument visualises the violent act in the manner of a lawyer attempting to sway a jury. Again we see how dramatic techniques are deployed in the characterisation of Apollo as an audience would find this similar to a messenger speech in the way it reports violent offstage events. It draws attention to them and of course associates Apollo further with violence. His argument may well have been widely accepted and his description is compelling, but his approach is divisive and typical of his limited, one-sided outlook.

Apollo's 'mother argument' (657-66), where he defends Orestes by arguing that the mother is not the real blood relative of the child, is particularly 'controversial' and much discussed:⁴³

καὶ τοῦτο λέξω, καὶ μάθ' ὥς ὀρθῶς ἐρῶ·
οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἡ κεκλημένη τέκνου
τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου·
τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώισκων, ἡ δ' ἄπερ ξένωι ξένη
ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβῃ θεός.
τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδὲ σοι δείξω λόγου·

⁴³ See Kitto (2002: 93), Sidwell (1996: 47), Podlecki (1992 ad loc.), Conacher lists ancient support for the theory (1987: 185). Sommerstein's particularly convincing view (1989: 206-8) is that 'The audience probably saw Apollo's arguments as a clever and specious but fallacious piece of forensic pleading (and so do half of the male jury). He adds: The theory of reproduction propounded by Apollo is very similar to that which Aristotle (GA 763b 31-33) ascribes to Anaxagoras and other *phusiologoi* to the effect that 'the seed originates from the male, while the female provides the place in which it can develop.' Apollo's argument should neither be dismissed as absurd on the basis of biological knowledge not available to Aeschylus, nor regarded as the Greek view on this subject. Athenian society, although patriarchal and patrilineal did treat mother and child bond as closer than father and child in important respects (he gives other arguments). Solmsen (1947: 220-21), Zeitlin (1978: 167ff.), Hogan (1984: 172) also discuss the 'mother argument'.

πατήρ μὲν ἄν γέναιτ' ἄνευ μητρός· πέλας
μάρτυς πάρεστι παῖς Ὀλυμπίου Διός,
οὐκ ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη,
ἀλλ' οἷον ἔρνος οὔτις ἄν τέκοι θεά.

If this argument had some credence in intellectual terms, it certainly, as Winnington-Ingram notes, left 'an emotional problem unsolved' in neglecting the importance of the mother.⁴⁴ I note how Apollo's language here also undermines his point, particularly in the use of *θρῶισκων* (660) which Collard notes is 'an astonishingly intrusive image, its animal violence (the Greek verb is literally 'leaps on') suggesting the crude unreason of Apollo's assault on motherhood'.⁴⁵

This passage, therefore, can be related to the theme of gender conflict which is emphasised in Aeschylus' version of the Orestes myth.⁴⁶ Movement towards re-assertion of patriarchal dominance is an important dynamic of the trilogy as the male Orestes is exonerated of matricide by a goddess who 'approve[s] the masculine in everything' (trans. Collard). Apollo is patriarchy's representative on the divine plane but, as such, he is not unchallenged. Obvious tensions are expressed through the weakness of his gender-based

⁴⁴ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 123-24) finds that the universal sentiment of mankind which is outraged by matricide remains untouched by Apollo's argument. The motherhood of her who bore, not only Orestes but Iphigenia, cannot be so easily disparaged.

⁴⁵ Collard (2002 ad loc.). See further on this word, Sommerstein above, n. 23.

⁴⁶ The *Od.* has no Erinyes pursuing Orestes, no sacrifice of Iphigenia, and the death of Clytemnestra is played down by never being described. In the *Oresteia* there is a chain of male/female conflicts including Helen being held responsible for the Trojan war, Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, Apollo's destruction of Cassandra, Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon, Orestes' murder of his mother, his pursuit by female Furies and protection by the male Apollo. The female/male Athena is the one to resolve the situation.

arguments here, as they were earlier through his treatment of the sympathetic Cassandra, and as they will be later when he is eventually sidelined by a goddess and the female Furies.

Apollo's arguments may have been seen as clever, if superficially so, and Athena does declare his case won (Winnington-Ingram points out that this is the main argument in his favour⁴⁷). However, if Apollo is clever, Athena (who is also a notably clever god in Homer⁴⁸) has become wise in Aeschylus. She moves beyond revenge and violence and can accommodate both male and female and the vengeful Furies within an Athenian system of justice.

λίπεν δέ ε Φοῖβος 'Απόλλων (*Iliad* 22.213)

In the final stages of the play Apollo is marginalised. This is suggested by the location of the trial itself, which again echoes Athenian legal procedure to make a point, by Athena's replacement of him as both the representative of Zeus and as the superior and dominant divine force, and possibly by the abrupt nature of his exit.

Apollo appears at Athens to represent Orestes on a charge of 'justified' murder, but the trial is not held at the *Delphinion* – Apollo's Athenian temple which was used as a court for this

⁴⁷ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 123-24).

⁴⁸ For example, at *Il.* 9.39; 14.179 and as patron of the ingenious Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.

kind of proceeding⁴⁹ – but at the ‘more politically realistic’ court of the Areopagus.⁵⁰ The setting in *Eumenides* is of course not the ‘real’ Athens, and it is the mythical first murder trial which is represented here. The depiction of the trial is not entirely realistic, but there are enough similarities with actual legal procedure to invite the audience to make connections with their own social and political realities,⁵¹ and to see Athenian legal systems being privileged while a form of justice associated with Apollo is sidelined.

Athena takes over as the representative of Zeus. Apollo has earlier asserted himself in this role and this will be examined first as its effect is actually to emphasise his replacement by Athena.

At 620-21 Apollo said ‘I tell you plainly: understand how strong this just plea is, and heed the Father’s will; an oath is in no way stronger than Zeus.’ (trans. Collard). This suggestion that oaths are inferior to the will of Zeus has been seen as another of his dubious arguments.⁵² But it could also be seen to show Apollo’s fierce allegiance to Zeus. His role

⁴⁹ See Chapter 1, n. 67.

⁵⁰ Bierl (1994: 87). In 462-61, only three years before the *Oresteia* was presented, the Areopagus Council was stripped of most of its powers, leaving only the responsibility to try murderers.

⁵¹ Podlecki (1992: 207, 210) notes several points of similarity with actual practice at the Areopagus. Sommerstein (1989: 16-17) finds that it is actually more like an ordinary court, the procedure at the Areopagus being much stricter and more solemn. See, for example, Dem. 23.67-69. See also MacDowell (1963: 80-90). Taplin (1977: 390ff.) finds serious deficiencies in this scene because of how it differs from actual practice and suspected ‘large-scale textual tampering’.

⁵² Mikalson (1991: 85) finds the idea was intended to be seen as wrong and improper, part and parcel of Apollo’s limited, unprincipled and erroneous view of this moral and legal dilemma. I find Apollo in some

as representative of his father is actually mentioned in this play overtly for the first time in the trilogy. However, it was noted on Apollo's first mention in *Agamemnon* that the relationship between father and son drew in particular on the *Iliad* where we saw the limits of their relationship. This becomes clear in *Eumenides*.

At the opening of the play the Pythia declares Apollo to be Zeus' spokesman (16ff.).

προφήτης (16) means literally 'he who speaks for'. At 614-21 Apollo asserts his position as Zeus' representative:

λέξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τόνδ' Ἀθηναίᾳς μέγαν
θεσμόν, δικαίως, μάντις ὦν δ' οὐ ψεύσομαι.
οὐπώποτ' εἶπον μαντικοῖσιν ἐν θρόνοις,
οὐκ ἀνδρός, οὐ γυναικός, οὐ πόλεως πέρι,
δὲ μὴ κελεύσαι Ζεὺς Ὀλυμπίων πατήρ.
τὸ μὲν δίκαιον τοῦθ' ὅσον σθένει μάθε.
βουλῇ πιφαύσκω δ' ὑμῖν ἐπισπένθαι πατρός.
ὄρκος γὰρ οὔτι Ζηνὸς ἰσχύει πλέον.

It is a very powerful assertion, and the use of ὑμᾶς (614) suggests that it may be made directly to Athenians (Collard finds it is addressed to jurors; it could suggest both of these). Here Apollo declares that as a prophet he will not lie and that he has never spoken a word

places does undermine the importance of oaths and may be being characterised by this. See 213-18 where he argues that any oath is weaker than the allegiance of husband and wife. Elsewhere (not by Apollo) the supremacy of oaths seems asserted – *Cho.* 901 and *Eum.* 486. At 679-80 the line often attributed to Apollo asks the jurors to vote with respect for their oaths but I believe this is more likely to be spoken by the Chorus (see n. 24). This may again act to distance Apollo from the democratic trial process as a series of oaths was typical of trials. See Podlecki (1992: 204-6) and Sommerstein notes how the Areopagus' most notable feature was the series of awe-inspiring oaths taken by prosecutor and defendant and all their witnesses (1989: 16).

other than what was or what might have been commanded by Zeus. His truthfulness seems to be tied up with his representation of his father. See also lines 713-14:

κἄγωγε χρησμούς τοὺς ἐμούς τε καὶ Διὸς
ταρβεῖν κελεύω μηδ' ἀκαρπώτους κτίσαι.

This suggests that Apollo and Zeus act as one, including, presumably, in the command to Orestes. The effect is that the more Apollo's representation of and dependence on Zeus are asserted the more dramatic and meaningful are his exit and replacement by Athena.

When Athena takes over she often invokes Zeus on her own behalf (797-99, 826-29, 850, 973). Zeus, as a god able to encompass all, presides over the revenge on Troy and the establishment of a democratic legal system. Athena's replacement of Apollo has been noted.⁵³ I want to show how it draws on their relative positions in Homer and Athenian cult (and later chapters will show how it is a recurring theme in tragedy).

In the *Iliad* Athena is as much of a warrior as Apollo (although even there, as noted in Chapter 1, p. 27, citing Graf's comment, she is 'the hoplite's goddess' and he is a bowman – the *kind* of warrior she is being already more suited to Athenian democratic values). In the *Oresteia* Athena is still a warrior and is usually taken to be wearing armour (see Lattimore's stage direction on her entrance at 397) and she is described in very masculine terms (296, 297, 398, 736 and 737). She is actually given credit for the Greek victory over Troy (457-58). However, if she is warlike, it is on behalf of Athens. At 862 she encourages war against outsiders as opposed to civil strife (this and 913-15 have often been seen as a

⁵³ See Winnington-Ingram (1983: 149), Kitto (2002: 92), Sommerstein (1989: 158). Thomson (1973: 263-64), Bierl (1994: 85, 87).

warning to the city against civil war; the Furies echo it at 976ff.). Apollo's warlike nature is divisive within the city. This trust in the protection of Athena rather than Apollo also echoes their relative cult status. Parker notes that 'Apollo is not immediately associated with Athens' military activities' whereas Athena (especially as *Nike*) is the chief god invoked at times of war.⁵⁴

Athena is also a civic god. She promotes rational decision-making over emotional (see, at 129, her desire to hear both sides), concerted action over individual, and the importance of humans in running their own affairs.⁵⁵ She is able to tame the Furies and she understands the need to acknowledge and absorb them as a positive force within the city.⁵⁶ She is already 'protectress of cities' in the *Iliad* (6.360), Troy's patron goddess even though on the Greek side. Her only other appearance in Aeschylus is in *Seven Against Thebes* where she is also protectress of the city (164, 501-3). It is Athens, however, with which she is supremely associated. Papadopoulou comments that the term 'Queen of the land' (*Eumenides* 288) implies that she is its chief political authority,⁵⁷ and she addresses 'my citizens' (487, 707-8, 691, 693, 697). She also refers to Zeus *Agoraios* (973) which is an epithet she shares, as *Agoraia*, and concerns Athenian legal institutions (see Chapter 1, p. 43). As Apollo leaves, the theatre space and the 'civic space' become hers.

⁵⁴ Parker (2005: 402-3).

⁵⁵ See Sommerstein (1989: 24) on this feature.

⁵⁶ Johnston (2009: 225) notes that Apollo is not even aware of their threat of famine and plague as he is already offstage.

⁵⁷ Papadopoulou (2001: 304).

The timing and staging of Apollo's sudden exit are, like those of his entrance, much debated,⁵⁸ and have often been taken as authorial disapproval or as a suggestion of the god's irrelevance.⁵⁹ It is not certain when he does leave but wherever it happens it is sudden. Taplin notes that Apollo leaving the scene 'silent and unnoticed' is unique in tragedy,⁶⁰ and that not even minor characters drop out without a trace.⁶¹ Again, if we can trust the text, it does seem strange that (and Collard notes on 777 that some editors have wondered why) Apollo makes no response to Orestes' acquittal (see, though, Most, n. 58). In support of the idea that this sudden exit was a feature of the performance, it is consistent with other aspects of his presentation in *Eumenides*, and it recalls the Apollo of the *Iliad* where he is strongly characterised by his distance and lack of involvement in human affairs (see Chapter 1, pp. 25-26). In particular, he leaves Hector very abruptly when Zeus has weighed the scales and found that he must die (22.208-13).⁶² Again, we see tragedy problematising Homeric characteristics of Apollo, recontextualising the Homeric

⁵⁸ Taplin (1977: 405) comments that the earliest he could leave is after 753 and the latest is after 777 with Orestes, but in that case he would be standing silent through Orestes' speech which is not really appropriate either. 'We should at least consider the possibility of textual corruption' (406), that is, a lost speech of farewell. Collard (2002) finds that 'we have to infer his departure together with Orestes at 777.' Most (2006) also questions our text suggesting that the last three lines of Orestes' speech are spoken by Apollo.

⁵⁹ See Kitto (2002: 94), Winnington-Ingram (1983: 147), Sommerstein (1989: 234). Less negative interpretations of his silent exit are found in Roberts (1984: 71), Macleod (1982: 134).

⁶⁰ Taplin (1978: 38-39).

⁶¹ Taplin (1977: 403).

⁶² Roberts (1984: 89) likens Apollo's exit in *Eum.* to his abrupt departure from Hector in the *Il.* finding that '...there is something particularly chilling in the way Apollo leaves even those he has befriended when fate demands'.

Apollo/Athena conflict within a dramatic scheme which privileges Athenian values over those of Delphi.

The Eumenides / Semnai Theai

In these final scenes we see how the Eumenides represent the other side of the coin in the *Oresteia*'s complex attitudes to democratic justice; they reveal the shortcomings of the new system by being still necessary within it. We see the Eumenides being given a role and led to their new home. Athena tells them:

ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμῖν πανδίκως ὑπίσχομαι
ἔδρας τε καὶ κευθμῶνας ἐνδίκου χθονός. (804-5)

This home is obviously a cave of some sort; χθονός (805) suggests underground.⁶³ This suggestion is seen again in κατὰ γῆς (1007),⁶⁴ and κάτω χθονὸς τόπους (1023).⁶⁵ The attendant Chorus procession leads them γὰς ὑπὸ κεύθεσιν ὠγυγίοισιν (1036).⁶⁶

These descriptions complete the chain of cave images from the reference to the actual

⁶³ Lattimore has 'a place...deep-hidden underground', Collard, 'a hidden place'.

⁶⁴ 'Beneath the ground' (Lattimore). Also θαλάμους (1004) in other contexts suggests the underworld, for example in *Persians* 624 where the Chorus instruct the queen to send libations to dwelling places beneath the earth and Eur. *Supp.* 1022 referring to Persephone's Halls or the underworld.

⁶⁵ Lattimore has 'deep and subterranean hold'. Collard has 'places within and below the earth.'

⁶⁶ Lattimore has 'in the primeval dark of earth hollows'. Collard has 'in the earth's primeval hidden places'.

Compare Hes. *Theog.* 806 which uses the similar word ὠγύγιον to describe the primeval waters of Styx.

Pythios cave in *Agamemnon* through the mythical Delphic cave in *Choephoroi*.⁶⁷ As a shrine for the newly installed Eumenides it could be seen to underline here their importance and Apollo's lack of a role. Aeschylus also relates them to another contemporary Athenian cave shrine. The newly created Eumenides are usually seen as a reference to the already established cult figures of the Semnai Theai. There was a shrine to them on the north east slope of the Areopagus which was well established by the mid fifth century,⁶⁸ although it seems to be Aeschylus' invention to equate them with reformed Furies.⁶⁹

As in the discussion of the cave image in *Agamemnon*, it is worth considering here the significance of Athenian topography. The echoes of earlier references to Apollo's cave would have been particularly apparent to the Athenian audience as both cult sites are

⁶⁷ See also, at 22-23, the Pythia refers to the Corycian cave and its nymphs among a list of divinities to be honoured. This actual cave was high up on Mount Parnassus overlooking Delphi (Paus. 10.32.2) and was sacred to the Corycian nymphs, and most of all to Pan (10.32.5). It was probably widely known as the cave where most Delphians had hidden from the Persian invasion (Hdt. 8.32). It is not of particular significance to Apollo but as a piece of imagery it reflects the Acropolis cave at Ag. 55-59 with its repeated association of cave, divine beings (here δαίμων) and birds, and is thus a possible further reminder of the Athens/Delphi link which is made in other ways in this passage.

⁶⁸ Thuc. 1.126.11 refers to the altar of the Dread Goddesses during the seizing of the Acropolis by Cylon around 630. Plut. *Solon* 12.1 makes a similar reference. There are also the following references which, although later, reveal that those acquitted in a trial before the Areopagus had a sacrifice made for them at the Furies' shrine (Paus. 1.28.6) and judges, prosecutors and defendants made an oath which included them before the Areopagus court (Din. *Contra Dem.* 47). See Lardinois (1993: 315ff.). See discussion and references in Parker (2009: 146).

⁶⁹ Lardinois (1993: 316), Parker (2009: 148ff.).

nearby, to the same north westerly side of the Acropolis. The shrine of the Semnai Theai was actually on the slopes of the Areopagus which is to the north west of the Acropolis, and Aeschylus even moves it closer.⁷⁰ Their new home (855) is specifically described as being close to the house of Erechtheus, ancestor of all Athenians – ἔδραν ἔχουσα πρὸς δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως. It is a particularly central and honoured spot where they are told they will receive more honours than they could receive elsewhere (866-67).

Where Apollo's cave at *Agamemnon* 55-59 was linked with the epic past and the avenging of the Atreidae at Troy, and his cave in *Choephoroi* was associated with the primaeval past of Delphi and its, now superseded, revenge system, the Furies are here being honoured with a cave shrine for the future. Here they will have vital civic functions and will help to maintain civilised order. They will be given first fruits in offerings for children and marriage ceremonies (834-36). They are in fact given entire management of men's lives (927ff.). Great good will come to the citizens who, if they hold the Eumenides in high honour, will be able to steer the city in a just and upright way (991ff). Winnington-Ingram points out the paralleling of the reference to the procession of the *Pythais* at the beginning of *Eumenides* with the procession at the end as the Eumenides are led to their new home.⁷¹ I would add that this is underlined by the further parallel that the *Pythais* was a procession from a cave and this is a procession to one.

⁷⁰ Collard (2002 ad loc.): 'Aeschylus rather freely moves it to the northern side of the Athenian Acropolis [...] closer to the great protective deities of Athens.'

⁷¹ Winnington-Ingram (1983: 153).

This emphasises Apollo's marginalisation. Even Furies can be transformed into forces which will bring new life from the earth (921-26, 938-48) rather than be a blight on it (780-87). Apollo leaves abruptly with no comment on the final outcome; he is the one who cannot change. Apollo has beneficial qualities which will be rejected with him, while the Furies must be accommodated even though they will still operate to some extent through fear,⁷² and in this way the relationship between Olympian Apollo and the chthonic deities has expressed the moral complexities of the progression from personal vengeance to a democratic system.

Conclusion

These three chapters, by combining close study of the god in the texts of the plays with that of elements of performance and of references to aspects of the god in the wider Athenian context have shown how Apollo is created as a complex and ambivalent figure. We have seen how this figure functions in relation to themes which address contemporary issues, and is in fact central in Aeschylus' challenging of both epic and Delphic value systems in favour of Athenian alternatives. This treatment seems to reflect a high degree of confidence in Athenian political systems and beliefs at this time. Around forty years later, in an age in which Athenian self-belief was considerably weaker, Euripides' *Ion* will also deploy an Apollo figure, but will engage with aspects of the Athenian context in a very different way by appropriating the god, as *Patrōos*, into a central role in the city. Next, though, we will see how Sophocles, whose Apollo figures carry considerable echoes of the *Oresteia*, uses

⁷² As they said themselves at 517-25, and see 990 where their frightful appearance has not changed.

the god in new and complex themes in engagement with changes in the Athenian intellectual context.

PART III: APOLLO IN SOPHOCLES

Chapter 5: New rationalism and old fears – oracular and Homeric

Apollo in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (425?) and *Electra* (410?)¹

In the tragedies of the second half of the fifth century, Apollo continues to be a high profile figure. There is in fact new impetus to tragic interest in the god and this can be considered partly in the light of evidence for an increased interest in his cult at Athens.² We can also see reasons for shifts and developments in Apollo's presentation in the distinctive approaches of new tragedians, new types of tragedy, in demands for novel treatments of myths, and in the tragic response to changes in the Athenian socio-political and cultural contexts.

Apollo is an important god in *OT* and *Electra*.³ Sophocles' characteristic use of Apollo is

¹ The date of *OT* is uncertain; it has sometimes been taken as 426 or 425 based on the assumption that 'ὁ πόλις, πόλις' at 629 is parodied in Ar. *Ach.* 27, produced in 425, although Dawe (1982, on 1515-30) is dismissive of the theory. See further on the date of *OT* in n. 67 below. The date of *El.* is also uncertain but there is compelling argument based on theme and style for this as a late play of Sophocles: see Lloyd (2005: 17) and March (2001: 20ff.). This makes it likely that the play was produced after Eur. *El.* See Finglass (2007) for further recent discussion on the dating of *El.*

² In the remaining chapters I will refer back to the discussion of the evidence for this in Chapter 1, pp. 52ff.

³ Regarding Sophocles' other plays, there will be some brief reference in this chapter to *OC* which also has some role for Apollo. Apollo is mentioned only twice in both *Phil.* and *Aj.* and once each in *Ant.* and *Trach.* Sophocles' fragments mentioning Apollo: *Ichneutai* fr. 314 where he also makes a stage appearance; *Niobe* frr. 441.aa.1 and 2, 441a, 442 (*TrGF*). Soph. *Alcmaeon* (fr.108) does not mention Apollo but he is involved in

as a focus for addressing the new rationalist speculations at the same time as he represents the continuing mysteries of the divine world. In this chapter we will see the dramatic potential of Apollo's oracle within tragedy's dialogue with aspects of the new rationalism, and there will be discussion of how we can approach Sophocles' engagement with the historical context, including historical events that have particular relevance for Apollo. In both plays Sophocles combines this engagement with new issues and events with thematically significant suggestions of darker aspects of Apollo. I mean by this that we see here echoes of the imagery of darkness which was used, especially in *Choephoroi*, to suggest an element of moral darkness in the god. In Aeschylus these darker aspects associated Apollo with the blood revenge of the chthonic Furies; here they function to express continuing concerns about prophecy and the divine unknown.

Oedipus Tyrannus

In *OT* we see that this combination of engagement with new ideas and references to aspects of Apollo in the tragic tradition and in cult is developed in various ways. The first section will examine Sophocles' presentation of the oracle, showing the effect of his innovative combination of ambiguity, reference to contemporary practice and to aspects of oracular Apollo in the tragic tradition. Next, we will see how *OT* deploys the traditionally distant Apollo while placing the dramatic focus on human experience of the divine. This experience includes expressions of scepticism about Delphic prophecy (a questioning which widens to encompass all gods), and of limited human understanding of the divine, as

this tale of murderous revenge against a mother and pursuit by Furies, similar to the Orestes story (the story is told in Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.7.5).

Apollo is mysteriously related to other supernatural forces in the responsibility for events and human impulses. Finally, there is a section on Apollo's enigmatic involvement in the sending of the plague, and its cure, in the play. This will be examined in relation to a previous literary manifestation of Apollo, as the sender of plague-arrows in the *Iliad*; it will also be related to the spectators' awareness of contemporary events and circumstances, both the plague which hit Athens from 430 and the uncertain status of the god's healing cult in fifth-century Athens.

The Delphic oracle in *OT*

There are a number of extant literary versions of the Oedipus myth in which we see that the oracle was an established element of the story before Sophocles; it would, therefore, be an element familiar to the spectators of *OT*.⁴ Sophocles' presentation of the oracle, however, is highly innovative in the way it combines old and new.⁵ He uses aspects of contemporary

⁴ Our earliest references to Oedipus do not mention an oracle: *Il.* 23.678-80, *Od.* 11.271-80 (the *Nekiya*); Hes. *Op.* 162-63. Hes. *Theog.* 325ff. mentions the Sphinx. There is an *Oedipodeia* in the Epic Cycle but with few remaining fragments. Delphic influence has been seen in the *Thebaid* (for example, by de Kock, 1961: 20) as here Oedipus is an ἄγος, or outcast, with the idea that bloodshed demanded cleansing. In fr. 3 (West), from a schol. on *OC*, Eteocles and Polyneices are said always to send Oedipus a portion of meat from the sacrifice. It could be inferred from this that he is not able to attend sacrifices and so must be polluted, presumably because of his actions. In Stes. fr. 222A, 204ff. (West) Teiresias foretells the sons' doom from oracles of Apollo. Pind. *Ol.* 2.38-40 has Oedipus fulfil an old Pythian oracle by killing Laius. In Aesch. *Sept.* the oracle to Laius (467) must have been central to the theme of the trilogy. See Burian (1997: 184) and Segal (2001: 29ff.) on known literary versions.

⁵ Jouanna (1997: 294) notes how Sophocles combines different kinds of oracle.

oracular practice along with echoes of the darker side of Apollo and Delphi which we saw in Aeschylus; the latter might seem to cast some blame on Apollo for Oedipus fate, but Sophocles' use of oracular ambiguity ensures that Apollo's involvement remains enigmatic. These aspects of the oracle combine to suggest a mysterious divine world, and the limits of human understanding in the face of divine inscrutability.

The play opens with a reference to contemporary oracular practice. In the later fifth century the oracle was still an important part of Athenian life,⁶ while evidence points to its not being seriously questioned by the new philosophy.⁷ Sophocles echoes typical procedure in requests to the actual oracle. The first reference is to a Theban oracle in 'Ismenus/gives oracles by fire' (22-24, trans Grene).⁸ Oedipus, however, in seeking to rid the city of plague, has sent Creon to the Delphic Oracle (69-71). This follows previous versions of the myth while also reflecting actual practice; people may have used different oracles for different reasons but the importance of this question requires Delphi.

⁶ Thucydides gives less space to prophecies than does Herodotus but he does record considerable Athenian interest in them. This increases at the time of the early 430s and the beginning of the war with Sparta. See Thuc. 2.8; 2.17; 2.21; 2.54. See Garland (1984: 80), Parke (1967: 109) and Hornblower (1992: 192-3).

⁷ On the continuing prevalence of belief in oracles in the 5th century see Bowden (2005: 81) and Flower (2008: 12). The evidence from Plato is that, even by the 4th century, the religious authority of oracles is still strong: *Leg.* 685e6 to 686a5, 738b5 to e2, 759c, 856e, 865b, 871d; *Epin.* 988a; *Resp.* 427b, 469a, 470a. Although there is possibly a loss of Delphic influence on major political decision-making in the 5th century; see Introduction, n. 46.

⁸ Hogan (1984) comments that Ismenos is the son of Apollo. Apollo does have a son Ismenos (Paus. 9.10.5) but in *OT* this is more likely to refer to Apollo himself (especially as he is mentioned along with Zeus and Athena which is common in both Homer and tragedy). There was an Apollo *Ismenos* at Thebes (Hdt. 8.134; Pind. *Pyth.* 11.6ff.; Paus. 9.10.2, 4.).

Apollo is called on for help (149-50, 205) and to reveal who the murderer of Laius is (278-79). It is expected, based on past experience, that Apollo *will* help (165-66). As a standard prayer formation establishing bonds with the god, this also underlines the contemporary familiarity of the process.⁹ This request to the Delphic oracle for aid and advice for a city (96-97, 35, 48, 51) is typical of questions to the real oracle,¹⁰ but may have been an innovation in tragedy. Apollo has answered the question ἐμφανῶς – plainly (96). The issue of ambiguity in oracles is examined more closely below, but the fact that this is an unambiguous response and, therefore, like a ‘real’ oracle may be implied. At 95ff. Creon’s report of Apollo’s command suggests the straightforward help and advice and benevolent, or at least neutral, solutions of actual recorded oracles. However, this is already questioned and ominous as, at 80-81, Oedipus’ ironic comment – ‘O holy lord Apollo,/grant that his news too may be bright for us/and bring us safety.’ (trans. Grene) – draws on audience knowledge of the story and, at least broadly, of its ending.

Almost all prophecies in earlier extant tragedies, including all of those in Aeschylus (see Chapter 3, pp. 90-91), concern warnings of exile, untimely death, or commands to murder. In Euripides a considerable proportion of Delphic prophecies also follow this tradition,

⁹ Swift (2010: 75) notes how the paianic language strikes an inauspicious note here where it is connected with mourning Thebans.

¹⁰ See the first type of actual oracle in Bowden’s list of typical questions asked at Delphi (2005: 110). For example, according to Diogenes Laertes 1.110 (P&W 13), Athenians in 596 BCE enquired for a remedy from plague and Epimenides performed sacrifices to rid it.

including Apollo's matricide command in *IT*, *Electra* and *Orestes*.¹¹ This is also true to some extent of Sophocles' oracles in *OT* and *Electra* (and *OC*). In *OT* (711-14) we see the prophecy to Laius that he will be killed by his son, and the prophecy to Oedipus that he will kill his father and marry his mother (788-93, 994-96). At 100-2 Apollo's command to purify the city by 'blood for blood' could be seen to echo his morally questionable association with blood revenge in Aeschylus. In *OC* we hear of the horrors that Apollo prophesied for Oedipus (84ff.) and that Laius will die at the hands of his son (969-70). In *Electra* Apollo, of course, commands Orestes to commit matricide (32ff.).

To place this in the context of Sophocles' oracles generally, not all of his Delphic oracles concern death (*OC* 388ff., 603-5, 1331-32). At the same time, oracles which do concern murder or untimely death are not exclusive to Delphi; for example there are the prophecies from Zeus at Dodona in *Women of Trachis*.¹² And where references to a *non*-oracular Apollo in Sophocles' plays usually suggest a benign god,¹³ this is not exclusively the case:

¹¹ The proportion of Delphic prophecies associated with death to those that are not in Euripides is 12:7.

Prophecies concerning death: *Med.* 669-81 (Aegeus ignores a prophecy and this leads to his death); *Andr.* 50-53 (and see 1002-6, 1106-8, 1194-96); *Her.* 403-9; *Phoen.* 15-20 (and see 36-37, 1703); *Hipp.* 792-93, in Theseus ironic reference to Delphi as the oracle is ultimately blamed for Hippolytus' fate. Prophecies involving the matricide command: *Or.* 28-30 (and see 416, 1657); *El.* 973; *IT* 77ff. (and see 939ff.). There are exceptions at *Her.* 1026ff.; *Supp.* 6-7, 138ff.; *Phoen.* 34ff., 409ff.; *Ion* 65ff. (and see 531).

¹² *Trach.* 76ff. (and see 155ff.). These enigmatically prophesy either life or death for Heracles. See also the prophecy from Zeus at 1159-74 that Heracles would die at the hands of someone dead.

¹³ In *Trach.* he is Παιάν (221) and Ἀπόλλω προστάταν (209). In *Philoc.* he is also Παιάν (832) and at 334-35 (more ambivalently) he is both Φοῖβος – god of light – and the killer of Achilles.

in *Niobe* the archer-god seems particularly unpleasant as he eggs on Artemis to kill Niobe's daughters, pointing out a frightened one who is alone and trying to hide (frr. 441-42).

Sophocles has, in fact, been said to present a more benign, or even more moral, oracle than Aeschylus and to some extent this is true.¹⁴ In *Electra* Apollo may not even have commanded the matricide (discussed in the section on *Electra* below). However, as noted above, even when Sophocles alludes to contemporary practice – at *OT* 96ff. where Creon returns from Delphi – we see echoes of the darker side of the oracle, as found particularly in Aeschylus, in Apollo's instruction to take 'blood for blood' (100-2).

There are also suggestions of a dark, mysterious side to Delphi itself, one that is in stark contrast to the bright, idyllic Delphi we will see in *Ion*. After the confrontation between Oedipus and Teiresias, the Chorus speculate on who is the murderer of Laius (463ff.). The picture of Delphi presented in this passage recalls the bleak rocky place seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (Chapter 2, n. 47) and in the cave images in *Choephoroi*:

ἐνοπλος γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπενθρόισκει
πυρὶ καὶ στεροπαῖς ὁ Διὸς γενέτας,
δειναὶ δ' ἅμ' ἔπονται
Κῆρες ἀναπλάκητοι.

ἔλαμψε γὰρ τοῦ νιφέν-
τος ἀρτίως φανεῖσα
φήμα Παρνασοῦ τὸν ἄδη-
λον ἄνδρα πάντ' ἰχνεύειν.
φοιτᾷ γὰρ ὑπ' ἀγρίαν
ῥ' ἄντρα καὶ
πετραῖος ὁ ταῦρος,

¹⁴ See Jouanna (1997: 295).

μέλεος μελέωι ποδὶ χηρεύων,
τὰ μεσόμφαλα γᾶς ἀπονοσφίζων
μαντεῖα· τὰ δ' αἰὲς
ζῶντα περιποτᾶται. (469-82)

Delphi is described as a rock – πέτρα (464) – and snow-covered – νιφόμενος (473). At 469-70 we see suggestions of wild beast-like behaviour as Apollo 'leaps' on the murderer; as Segal comments, 'This 'leaping' of a god, like the mountains and the bull, mysteriously combines bestiality and divinity...'.¹⁵

The 'unknown murderer' is wandering seemingly from the direction of Delphi through the caverns – ἄντρα (478) – of Parnassus, pursued by the birds which are a familiar feature of Delphi and which here represent the prophecies themselves (birds and prophecy are also linked by Oedipus himself at 310, 394ff. and 966).¹⁶ This Delphi is not exclusively Apolline; these upper regions are usually associated with Dionysus.¹⁷ The murderer is also pursued by 'Fates' – Κῆρες (472) – and, indeed, this wild and mysterious Delphi has a resonance beyond Apollo here. As Segal notes,¹⁸ this passage is part of a pattern that associates the mountains with the unknown demonic world beyond human knowledge (compare Cithaeron where Oedipus was exposed, 421, and to which he will ask to be expelled, 1451-54. See also 1391-93, 1088).

¹⁵ Segal (2001: 84).

¹⁶ The audience at the Great Dionysia may be aware of birds around the *Pythios* cave here as was suggested as a possibility in the discussion of the cave references in *Ag*.

¹⁷ Plutarch describes a festival of Dionysus held on the hills above Delphi every year (*Mor.* 388e).

¹⁸ Segal (2001: 84).

If we see an echo here of the mysterious, uncivilised side of Delphi found in Aeschylus, the greater focus in *OT* on an individual gives it new meaning – a resonance with aspects of human experience in the changing intellectual context of late fifth-century Athens. Indeed, *OT* has invited Freudian interpretation of Apollo and the oracle as Oedipus' unconscious, here the murderer wandering in the depths of his own subconscious.¹⁹

The role of oracular Apollo in Sophocles is made even more enigmatic by the use of ambiguity. Oedipus, having been told that he is not his father's child (781) had asked Apollo about his parentage. In response, Apollo had told him (787-93) that he would kill his father and marry his mother, but not who his real parents are (789-90), setting in motion the tragic events as Oedipus leaves Corinth to avoid killing his father, unaware that Polybus and Merope are not his real parents.

First, to assess the fifth-century audience's perception of this, we can compare it with oracles found in other sources. As noted, this ambiguity is not typical of oracles found in inscriptions and law court speeches,²⁰ but is more reminiscent of the ambiguous oracles in Herodotus, a contemporary with whose work Sophocles seems to have been familiar.²¹

These include the two well-known oracles to Croesus and, the most famous examples of

¹⁹ See Segal (2001: 39, 167).

²⁰ See Bowden (2005: 49-51) on ambiguity in oracles.

²¹ See Griffin (2006: 46): Herodotus is described as a friend of Sophocles who addressed a poem to him (*IEG* 2.166 fr.5). Griffin finds passages in Sophocles which are clearly related to Herodotus: 'it seems certain that it was the tragedian who drew on the historian and not the reverse.' (see his refs. 56, n. 3).

oracular ambiguity, the two ‘wooden wall’ oracles with which Athens is told it must protect itself from the Persians; only Themistocles realised that they referred to ships.²²

Fontenrose finds that the Delphic reputation for ambiguity is actually wholly modern;²³

Herodotus quotes obscure and ambiguous oracles but never says that ambiguity was a

Delphic characteristic; references to ambiguity are late and often cite the Croesus oracles or Oedipus as typical pronouncements of Delphi.²⁴ Bowden finds that ambiguity is mostly a

feature of stories about oracles and makes the distinction that deliberate ambiguity was not the way the actual oracle worked.²⁵ It is valid to make the point, as does Bowden, that

modern perceptions of oracles are over-influenced by Herodotus as our main source while

extant inscriptions and law-court speeches are limited; and that these everyday oracles on

religious, political and social issues – if we take surviving ones as typical – would have

formed a large part of everyday life in fifth-century Athens.²⁶ However, Delphi did have a

reputation for cryptic or ambiguous responses, as is suggested by parodies of oracular

speech in Aristophanes (see, for example, *Knights* 195ff.);²⁷ indeed this was an important

²² The oracles to Croesus: Hdt 1.53-56 and 1.90-91 (P&W 53 and 54). The ‘wooden wall’ oracles: Hdt. 7.139-143 (P&W 94-95).

²³ Fontenrose (1978: 236-38).

²⁴ Fontenrose (1978: 236-38) finds that there is little evidence of perception of ambiguity other than two passages in Lucian which talk about enigmatic, indirect oracles and Apollo deceiving his clients: *Zeus Tragodos*, 28 and *Dialogues of the Gods*, 16.1.

²⁵ Bowden (2005: 51). Johnston (2009: 220) notes that ‘Gnomic utterances’ considered typical of Delphi in fact form only 7% of the corpus of Delphic responses.

²⁶ Bowden (2005: 4).

²⁷ See also Ag. 1255.

element of their mystique and prestige, and the prestige of those who interpreted them (as with Themistocles). The question is what Athenians would have perceived as a real oracle. Bowden and Fontenrose possibly take too narrow a view,²⁸ and it has been said that Athenians would not be likely to make clear distinctions between literary and real oracles.²⁹

The prophecy in *OT* is the best-known ambiguous oracle in tragedy,³⁰ but it is not the only example. There are ambiguous oracles in *Medea* (669-81), *Women of Trachis* (see n. 12), those in *Philoctetes* which prophesy his mysterious role in the taking of Troy³¹ (though, as noted, these latter two are not Delphic) and also in *Electra* (see the next section of this chapter).

Here the main point is to assess the function of ambiguity in the depiction of Apollo in this play. If the mysterious, somewhat dark, Delphi carries echoes of its element of moral darkness (and that of Apollo) in *Choephoroi*, the ambiguity of Apollo's prophecy is one way in which the question of his moral responsibility is opened up. Apollo may be ambiguous but he does not actually lie and, as Griffith notes,³² he is not obliged to help Oedipus as Oedipus has performed no service for him (compare Apollo and Chryses, *Il.*

²⁸ Stehle (2009: 251) finds Fontenrose's view of 'genuine' oracles too narrow, and observes a 'range of kinds of ambiguity' in recorded prophecies.

²⁹ See Crahay (1956: 202, n. 35), Roberts (1983: 19), Maurizio (1995: 308-12, 318).

³⁰ As Fontenrose points out (1978: 20), it is the oracle in *OT* itself which is so often used to represent the 'typical' ambiguous oracle.

³¹ *Philoc.* 610ff., 66-69, 1055-56, 982-84, 1433-36, 610-13.

³² Griffith (1996: 56).

1.39). Furthermore, Laius ‘deserves’ punishment for ignoring Apollo’s warning. The god’s responsibility for Oedipus’ fate remains a question and his involvement highly enigmatic.

In *OT*, the ambiguity of Apollo’s oracle can be seen in relation to aspects of the new philosophy: it has a wider resonance with ideas of inscrutable divine knowledge and with suggestions of the limitations of humans in their understanding of the forces which shape their world.³³ Oedipus can answer riddles (440) but cannot see through divine ambiguity. The irony of this is underlined in that both the oracle to Oedipus and the Sphinx’s riddle are about human identity, the answer to both in a way being always ‘himself’. Sophocles’ combination of this ambiguity with reference to contemporary practice and to elements from the tragic tradition of the oracle creates a particularly complex and mysterious Apollo. The Delphic oracle is a focus for expression not of actual disbelief but of fears about prophecy and of a questioning attitude to its role in human lives.³⁴ This creation of the god in *OT* from traditional and new elements is characteristic of Sophocles, a tragedian whose position is at the cusp of dark religious forces and exploration of the spectators’ experience of the contemporary world.

Human experience of the divine. 1. The distant god

Sophocles’ engagement with aspects of the new rationalism can also be seen in the increased attention paid to individual human experience of the divine, with a

³³ See Introduction, n. 54.

³⁴ Flower (2008: 17) notes that, even though Greek tragedy consciously problematises Greek divinatory rituals, in every play the seers and oracles are validated and those who ridicule them are destroyed.

correspondingly distant god, and also in his exploration of philosophical questions of causality. Apollo's traditional distance lends itself to Sophocles' characteristic presentation of remote and enigmatic divine forces. If Apollo at the end of *Eumenides* was meaningfully absent (as he will also be in several of Euripides' plays), in Sophocles he is rather a remote god. He is ἐκηβόλος – far-shooter (163) – as he has been since Homer (see Chapter 1, n. 3) but here as a non-anthropomorphic god, a distant force. Sophocles' Apollo is absent from the theatrical space but his presence is constantly evoked by the use of signs: Creon's laurel crown (83), Teiresias' presence (284-86), Jocasta's garlands and incense for Apollo (913).³⁵ These remind spectators of the remote, mysterious god whose oracle may in fact be controlling events from a distance. There may also be some fixed representation of Apollo on stage. We do not know if it is a statue; it could be the *Aguieus* column (as seen addressed by Cassandra in *Agamemnon*). When Jocasta says:

πρὸς σ', ὃ Λύκει' Ἀπολλων, ἄγγιστος γὰρ εἶ, (919)

she certainly seems to address something physically present – ἄγγιστος means 'nearest'.³⁶

Sourvinou-Inwood finds that 'The greater the distance between mortals and deities in the world of the tragedy, the smaller the distance between the world of the tragedy and that of the audience'.³⁷ On the other hand, spatial relationships on stage and in the spectators'

³⁵ Noted by Griffith (1996: 18). See further comment in Kavoulaki (2009: 235).

³⁶ Revermann (2003: 793), who thinks it is a statue, notes on 911 ff. that Sophocles' choice of making Apollo physically manifest and omnipresent on stage heightens the uncanny feeling of divine machinations as the driving force behind Oedipus' fate.

³⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 491).

experience of their world are not the same thing. Although the characters do not actually interact with gods on stage, the audience, because of the constant on-stage reminders of the god, may experience Sophocles' Apollo as mysteriously very much present.

This may be, as Humphreys suggests, the way in which tragedy deals with questions raised by the new rationalism: 'if gods have no bodies, their existence cannot be empirically disproved.'³⁸ Certainly in *OT* the ideas suggested by the non-anthropomorphic, remote, Apollo resonate beyond him to all gods.

Human experience of the divine 2. The characters' scepticism

In Apollo's stage absence there is some emphasis on the opinions of gods as voiced by human characters.³⁹ Apollo in Sophocles becomes a target for expressions of considerable scepticism about the gods and prophecy. Sentiments of fear and doubts about prophecy are typical of tragedy and a feature since Aeschylus,⁴⁰ but they receive impetus from tragedy's dialogue with the new elements of rationalism and scepticism in sophistic philosophers.⁴¹ We will see how these relate to attitudes to the oracle in other forms of Athenian discourse.

³⁸ Humphreys (2004: 55).

³⁹ See Budelmann (2000: 139) on the search for evidence for the gods in Sophocles in how the characters speak about them rather than in the events of the play.

⁴⁰ See Flower, Chapter 2 above, n. 64.

⁴¹ See Introduction n. 51, 54-56.

In *OT* the characters question and/or criticise prophets and oracle-mongers, Apollo and Delphi specifically, the oracles of other gods, and prophecy and prediction of the future generally. The first of these – censure of prophets and oracle-mongers – is found in other literary genres. In Aristophanes' comedies we see more emphasis on derision of prophets and especially *chresmologoi* or oracle-mongers at Athens; the oracle-monger is actually a stock figure in comedy. In *Peace* the oracle-monger Hierocles,⁴² is the 'charlatan' said to be approaching because attracted by the smell of roasting meat (1046-50).⁴³ In *Birds* (982ff.) we see the attitude to a 'genuine' Apollo compared with that to the oracle-monger who is a cheat or impostor.⁴⁴ This is an attack on their political influence rather than on divination itself,⁴⁵ and, as Smith notes, evidence from Aristophanes' plays suggests that 'the Delphic oracle is exempt from ridicule'.⁴⁶ We also have to consider comic overstatement even on the presentation of *chresmologoi*, and indeed Flower notes that there was largely respect for

⁴² Hierocles, the chresmologue was mentioned in a treaty between Athens and Chalcis in 446-45 (*IG* I² 39.63-66).

⁴³ See also *Eq.* 1080-85; *Nub.* 332. See Cleon as an oracle-monger in *Eq.* especially 197-205.

⁴⁴ Smith (1989: 151-52) notes that oracles of the *chresmologoi* collected in books were more susceptible to tampering, even outright fraud. The immediacy and unpredictability of the Delphic oracle protected it from such manipulation.

⁴⁵ Smith (1989: 140-41) notes that in Aristophanes, with rare exceptions, divination is depicted as quackery and its practitioners accused of fraud. It is actually 'the corrupt implementation of divination' that is a danger to the welfare of Athens rather than divination itself about which Aristophanes has little to say. Indeed, Garland comments (1984: 82, quoting Oliver, 1950) that 'the *chresmologoi* were under continual attack from the poets of the Old Comedy because until late in the 9th decade of the 5th century the political influence of the *chresmologoi* was regarded with apprehension.'

⁴⁶ Smith (1989: 153).

seers in classical Greece.⁴⁷ There are also, however, examples of criticism of prophets in historical literature, especially in Herodotus;⁴⁸ and in Thucydides we find disenchantment, even anger, with prophets in response to particular events and circumstances.⁴⁹ Even if we allow for the historians' own views, and our lack of alternative historical evidence, this criticism is clearly a running theme in Athenian discourse.

Criticism of individual prophets and traditional forms of prophecy is also found in tragedy: Oedipus makes derisory comments about bird divination (398-99, 965-67),⁵⁰ and he sees Teiresias as a self-interested trickster (388-90).⁵¹ *OT*, then, engages with some prevalent attitudes, but Oedipus' opinions must also be seen in relation to his character and the dramatic context. He lacks awareness of his situation; he has turned on Teiresias here when told he is the cause of the pollution, his attitude now in marked contrast to his earlier belief in Teiresias (310-15).

⁴⁷ Flower (2008: 5). He notes (145) how derision of seers is typical in societies which depend on them.

⁴⁸ See Hdt. 7.6 the story of Onomacritos who was expelled from Athens, and Hdt 7.143 the *chresmologoi* misinterpret the wooden wall oracles and are less skilful interpreters than Themistocles.

⁴⁹ Thuc. 2.47.4 suggests disenchantment during the plague becoming more serious. At 5.103 Thuc. describes prophecies and oracles as blind and vague compared with the human and practical. In Thuc. 8.1 we find disrespect for oracles and anger with prophets who had encouraged Athenians to believe they could conquer Sicily. Oliver (1950: 30) and Mikalson (1983: 40) even find that this marked the demise of the seer. Smith (1989: 155) finds that this overstates the case. Flower (2008: 139) notes that none of Aristophanes' later plays mentions *chresmologoi*; either they had been discredited and had disappeared or were no longer thought fit material for comedy (after the debacle of the Sicilian expedition for which they had been enthusiastic).

⁵⁰ This is possibly aimed at Delphi directly; birds are associated with Delphi and possibly the *Pythios* cave at Athens as discussed above.

⁵¹ See Flower (2008: 135-36) for further tragic examples.

In *OT*, however, there is also criticism specifically of Apollo and Delphi. This has been seen as unique,⁵² although such criticism is found in Euripides, and questioning of Apollo and his prophecies is a running theme in all tragedy. However, it is true that this questioning is particularly profound in *OT*. Jocasta frequently derides oracles in the play. At 707-9 she seems reluctant to condemn Apollo but does criticise his oracle specifically at 720 (and see 945-46, 951-52). At 856 she addresses *Loxias* (Apollo) when saying ‘So, as far as prophecy goes, henceforward I shall not look to the right hand or the left.’ (trans. Grene). However, this is after Oedipus has told her that he must be Laius’ killer, and we must take into account Jocasta’s emotional need *not* to see the truth, the creation of dramatic irony and the increased effect of a greater overturn in her views.

Oedipus challenges Apollo’s oracular authority by asking ‘why should one/look to the Pythian hearth?’ (964, trans. Grene), but this is after he and Jocasta have heard that Polybus is dead and so believe that Apollo’s prophecy that Oedipus will kill his father was wrong; it is, therefore, based on false information. These opinions of Apollo and Delphi are born of the desperation of individuals. The Chorus take the questioning to a deeper level. After Jocasta’s expressions of doubts (848-58) in the second stasimon, we see:

οὐκέτι τὸν ἄθικτον εἶμι
 γὰρ ἐπ’ ὀμφαλὸν σέβων,
 οὐδ’ ἐς τὸν Ἀβαῖσι ναόν,
 οὐδὲ τὰν Ὀλυμπίαν,
 εἰ μὴ τάδε χειρόδεικτα
 πᾶσιν ἀρμόσει βροτοῖς. (897-903)

⁵² Flower (2008: 136-37) finds Jocasta’s sentiments (707-25) unique in Greek literature.

The Chorus show how serious a matter it is if Apollo's oracle is not honoured, as tragedy addresses the wider consequences of prophecy being invalid.⁵³

φθίνοντα γὰρ < - u - x > Λαΐου
θέσφατ' ἐξαιρούσιν ἤδη,
κούδαμοῦ τιμαῖς Ἀπόλλων ἐμφανής·
ἔρρει δὲ τὰ θεῖα. (906-10)

Here the concept widens beyond the Apolline oracle to τὰ θεῖα – all gods, all religion – breaking down. These doubts regarding Apollo and Delphi will of course be overturned and Apollo proven right. At the end Oedipus will say that the gods hate him (1519), no longer expressing scepticism regarding the gods but rather his feelings as their victim.

This theme of doubt and vindication of Apolline oracles is also found in the lighter plays of Euripides, but in *OT* it has far more devastating results. The expressions of scepticism go deep but only to deepen the consequences of challenging the authority of the gods. The characters seem to sense this; their fear leads them to give more attention to gods. At this point Jocasta enters carrying garlands (911ff.) to make offerings to Apollo, a display of piety in stark contrast to her expressions of scepticism elsewhere. She is about to meet disaster and the address to Apollo – ὦ Λύκει' Ἀπολλων – is to no avail, as is often seen in calls upon Apollo as wolf-god.⁵⁴

⁵³ See Heinrichs (1994: 65ff.) on how the 'self-referentiality' of the Chorus' question 'Why should I dance?' in this speech brings the mythic world of the play close to 5th-century *polis* religion and may even make a specific contemporary reference.

⁵⁴ Again it is uncertain whether this word suggests 'Lycian', 'light' or 'wolf'. De Roquin, translating as 'wolf', comments that Apollo *Lykeios* is, as in *Sept.*, 'le dieu qui frappe cruellement celui qui invoque son

There was some discussion in the Introduction and Chapter 1 about the increased interest in Apollo generally at Athens in the second half of the fifth century, and of the evidence for this in the increase in the number of images of Apollo on vases.⁵⁵ There are also examples of greater interest in oracles in Thucydides in the early years of the Peloponnesian War.⁵⁶ Tragedy reflects, therefore, some attitudes to the gods found in the wider context – both scepticism and increased attention to gods. Tragedy also reflects the continuing importance of oracles in Athenian society; its prophecies continue to be vindicated but deeper questions are asked, darker possibilities considered. As scepticism is engaged with, tragedy here uses Apollo to face the possibility of lack of belief.

Human experience of the divine 3. Apollo, *daimones*, *moira* and *tyche*

In addition to the ambiguous oracle discussed earlier, another layer is added to the enigmatic Apollo by his role in Sophocles' presentation of a highly complex divine/human causality. This is not to enter here the debate on causality and moral responsibility generally in *OT*, but to examine how Apollo is presented within it. In *OT* the theme of

secours alors que celui-ci peut croire sa prière exaucée.' (1999: 107). On Λύκει' ἄναξ (203) Hogan (1984) comments that Sophocles means the word here as derived from 'light'. Some find it to mean killer of wolves and destroyer of enemies (Jebb, 1885 ad loc.; Kamerbeek, 1967 ad loc.). De Roguin (1999: 106) explains the relationship between the two in the connection between wolves and moonlight/twilight (cf. *Il.* 7.433). Griffith (1996: 26) reads it as 'light' and finds that 'Sophocles thinks of Apollo as pre-eminently a god of light', although this should be seen in the context of his view that Apollo is just in this play. See the discussion of *lyk*-prefixed words in Chapter 1, pp. 31ff.

⁵⁵ See the discussion on vase images in Chapter 1, pp. 52-53.

⁵⁶ See n.6 above and also Thuc. 5.26, 7.50 and Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.3.

limited human knowledge of the forces that shape people's lives, and engagement with aspects of the new rational enquiry, are here suggested by the fact that other mysterious forces are at work with Apollo in the many references to *daimones*, *moira* and *tyche* and to the mysterious ways in which Apollo and these forces are related.⁵⁷

Daimon is a complex term and translations vary. Burkert's useful definition of the *daimon* is as a divine 'mode of activity' rather than a being, and he notes that every god can act as a *daimon*.⁵⁸ In *OT* it is in places clearly a neutral term for divine forces.⁵⁹ Oedipus says he will be hateful to the gods – ἐχθροδαίμων (816) – if he is found to have killed Laius (816). Jocasta uses the term *daimon* when saying she will visit the temples of the gods (912). The context sometimes suggests that the *daimon* is an evil force. Here Oedipus has learned of the circumstances of Laius' death and fears Teiresias was right and that the gods are against him:

ἄρ' οὐκ ἅπ' ὤμοῦ ταῦτα δαίμονός τις ἂν
κρίνων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῷιδ' ἂν ὀρθοίη λόγον; (828-29)

The Greek expressions *eudaimon* and *kakodaimon* may suggest that *daimon* itself is neutral but, as here, *daimon* is frequently taken to suggest an evil deity.⁶⁰ See also at 1301 where Grene translates *daimon* as 'evil spirit'.

⁵⁷ See Introduction, n. 55 on Gorgias and questions of causality and responsibility.

⁵⁸ Burkert (1985: 179ff.). Humphreys (2004: 59) finds that Sophocles' δαίμονες are an example of 'deliberate non-characterising' of gods in response to empiricist questioning of the gods.

⁵⁹ Cf. Homer, *Il.* 1.222 where the gods assembled on Olympus are δαίμονες, and see also *Il.* 3.420.

⁶⁰ Here Grene has 'malignant god', Lloyd-Jones has 'cruel deity'.

At 1311 Oedipus asks ‘Spirit (*daimon*), how far have you sprung?’, and there is the suggestion that the *daimon* is Apollo because of the association between the god and ‘leaping’ which is also seen at 471. Segal notes that at that point Oedipus will have learned how cruel that *daimon* has been and how closely it is connected with the role of Apollo.⁶¹

At 1327-28 the Chorus ask Oedipus about the putting out of his eyes – τίς σ’ ἐπῆρε δαιμόνων; – and Oedipus is specific:

Ἀπόλλων τάδ’ ἦν, Ἀπόλλων, φίλοι,
ὁ κακὰ κακὰ τελῶν ἐμὰ τάδ’ ἐμὰ πάθεα.
ἔπαισε δ’ αὐτόχειρ νιν οὐ-
τις, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τλάμων. (1329-32)

If the use of *daimon* often suggests human confusion, here, on the question of which god to blame, Oedipus decides that it is Apollo.

There is also the question of how *moira* and *tyche* are involved. The concept of fate is not stable in tragedy, and this includes the question of whether it is stronger than gods.⁶² At 159ff. the Chorus call on Athena, then Artemis ‘and Phoebus, the Far Shooter, three averters of Fate’ (trans, Grene). As ἀλεξίμοροι (163) they are called on to ward off fate, but this does not mean that they are necessarily more powerful or carry more responsibility; rather this is an expression of what people hope for from the gods. Indeed, if Apollo is Oedipus’ *daimon*, he has also been seen as his fate: Winnington-Ingram finds that ‘it was the *moira* of Oedipus to fall at the hands of Apollo.’⁶³ Jocasta (977ff.) rejects prophecy and

⁶¹ Segal (2001: 91).

⁶² On fate in tragedy see Buxton (1984: 16), Burian (1997: 182-83), Mastronarde (2005: 322).

⁶³ Winnington-Ingram (1980: 187).

declares that chance is all in man's life. This suggests that Apollo and *tyche* are separate forces but they have also been seen to be related: Griffith finds that Apollo is behind the coincidences. Segal, however, notes that things do turn out as the god said but that the 'striking coincidences' are 'within the realm of possibility'.⁶⁴

As for how the fifth-century audience would have understood the relationships among the gods and *daimones*, *moira* and *tyche*, we cannot be certain. Apollo, as the giver of the oracle which drives the story, is the divine focus (compare *Philoctetes* where unnamed gods are responsible for his pain and his rescue and role in the conquering of Troy⁶⁵).

This is underlined in other ways in the text; Sophocles does not allow certainty of blame or lay moral responsibility entirely on Apollo. On the one hand he has *prophesied* everything, while Teiresias (his prophet) has spoken the truth. At 496-502 the Chorus say 'Truly Zeus and Apollo are wise/and in human things all knowing.' (trans. Grene). On the other hand there is also the suggestion that he is to blame for events. Teiresias says:

οὐ γάρ σε μοῖρα πρὸς γ' ἐμοῦ πεσεῖν, ἐπεὶ
ἱκανὸς Ἀπόλλων, ὧι τάδ' ἐκπρᾶξαι μέλει. (376-77)

In Apollo's 'defence' we could also raise the issue of *Oedipus Colonus* here. Oedipus in that play does achieve a unique kind of greatness through his suffering and reaches a semi-divine status in the end – and Apollo is involved in sending him to Athens.⁶⁶ However, we

⁶⁴ Griffith (1996: 135). Segal (2001: 55).

⁶⁵ *Philoc.* 254ff, 196-200, 446-52.

⁶⁶ See *OC* 85, 395, 450, 664, and cf. Sophocles' similar themes of healing and redemption in *Phil.* at this time.

cannot, in a study which focuses on the experience of the contemporary audience of *OT*, read meaning from the later play into the earlier.

Through a particularly enigmatic presentation of Apollo's moral responsibility, and through suggestions that the god acts in combination with other divine forces, Sophocles blurs the boundaries of his influence and he becomes a focus for expressing limited human understanding of the divine.

Pollution, plague and purification

There is a suggestion in *OT* that Apollo has sent the plague on the city, and he is also the one called on to provide the cure. This possibly places the plague-sending Apollo of the *Iliad* in a new context – the plague at Athens from 430 – as there appears to have been no plague in the Oedipus story previously.⁶⁷ The plague is on Thebes of course but can still be related to contemporary Athenian experience.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Knox (1956) finds 425 to be the date of production because of allusions to the second outbreak of the plague and to the purification of Delos (154) in the winter of 426-25. See Thuc. 3.104. It cannot be later because Aristophanes seems to parody it in *Eq.* produced 424, for example at 1240, cf. *OT* 738 and 1244 cf. *OT* 836. Mitchell-Boyask (2008: 56-66) discusses the use of disease language in *OT*. Alternatively, Griffith (1996: 39-40) notes Sophocles' interest in medicine but also that his plague could be explained entirely in intertextual rather than biographical terms.

⁶⁸ The myth was traditionally associated with Thebes (*Od.* 11. 90-151). See Zeitlin (1990), Easterling (1989: 11ff.). See also Vidal-Naquet (1990: 329-59). On the plague in *OT* and contemporary Athenian experience, see Ehrenberg (1954), Segal (2001: 2-13) and Knox (1957: 64-106). Mitchell-Boyask (2008: 66) finds as a

Sophocles develops considerably the theme of pollution and purification in the story.

Oedipus' is ostensibly the cause as Teiresias tells him:

ὥς ὄντι γῆς τῆσδ' ἀνοσίωι μιάστορι. (353)

(See also 313, 25ff., 33, 1012). μίασμα is the physical taint or stain that the city can drive out by banishing Oedipus and his impure presence (823, 1382, 95-101). Oedipus, on recognising himself as the cause, expresses the wish to be expelled (1289, 1410, 1436, 1518). At the same time, that Apollo has sent the plague on the city is also suggested, though never actually stated. The Priest asks:

Φοῖβος δ' ὁ πέμψας τάσδε μαντείας ἅμα
σωτήρ θ' ἔκοιτο καὶ νόσου παυστήριος. (149-50)

This may remind the audience that the stayer of the plague in the *Iliad* is the one who sent it. The Chorus of old men of Thebes suggest that it is Apollo's responsibility:

... ἐκτέταμαι φοβερὰν φρένα δείματι
πάλλων,
ἰήιε Δάλιε Παιάν,
ἀμφὶ σοὶ ἀζόμενος· τί μοι ἦ νέον
ἢ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις πάλιν ἐξανύσεις χρέος; (153-56)

In the last line ἐξανύω is a highly suggestive word and can even mean 'to kill', hence

Greene's translation: 'for what doom you will bring to pass'. As noted in Chapter 1 (n. 35),

Apollo would probably have been widely seen as the sender of the actual plague which hit

Athens from 430. The purification by depopulation of Delos in 426-25 (Thuc. 3.104)

suggested that 'The need to placate Apollo overrode all other considerations'.⁶⁹ The play,

reason for *OT* only coming second at the Dionysia that it was too close to actual events and 'scraped violently at emotional wounds'.

⁶⁹ Bowden (2005: 158). Swift (2010: 78) notes that the city having failed to pay a χρέος implies that plague is some kind of divine punishment.

then, could be seen to re-contextualise Homeric Apollo who sent plague arrows on the Greeks, and to engage with the spectators' awareness of contemporary events. Again, final blame is not cast upon Apollo; indeed, at 189ff. the plague seems to be blamed on Ares which makes causality uncertain.⁷⁰

Apollo is also the *purifier* of the plague in the play; he is called on as Παιῶν – 'Healer' (154) – and he is expected to help (96-97, 149-50, 165-66, 278-79). However, we have seen the tradition in tragedy by which Apollo is called on to heal in circumstances in which he cannot. In *OT* he does provide the method of healing – rid the murderer – but his involvement is enigmatic, and this too has contemporary resonance in that it can be related to the ambivalent status of Apollo as a healer and purifier in actual cult at Athens. Apollo and Delphi *are* associated with purification, although apparently not in actual practice;⁷¹ but Apollo is not prominent as a healing god at Athens (see Chapter 1, pp. 50-51), although Graf notes that this function of Apollo was less important everywhere after the Archaic period.⁷² At Athens it is a role taken rather by Apollo's son Asclepius;⁷³ his cult was introduced to Athens from Epidaurus in 420 on the initiative of the Athenian citizen,

⁷⁰ Swift (2010: 78-79) notes how, when the Chorus blame Ares, they use the straightforward language of the *paian* which is so clearly questioned by the complex and morally questionable Apollo of *OT* that the audience cannot believe them about Ares.

⁷¹ See Parker (1983: 140), Dyer (1969: 140). Graf (2009: 100-1) finds that purification forms part of 'the entire nexus of divination, illness and cure around Apollo.'

⁷² Graf (2009: 84).

⁷³ Flower (2008: 17) notes that even though Greek tragedy consciously problematises Greek divinatory rituals, in every play the seers and oracles are validated, and those who ridicule them are destroyed.

Telemachos.⁷⁴ It has traditionally been seen that the Asclepius cult was welcomed into the city by Sophocles himself.⁷⁵ Interestingly, Mitchell-Boyask argues that the location of the *Asklepieion* near the theatre suggests deep associations between drama, healing and the *polis*, while he does not particularly associate healing and Apollo in tragedy.⁷⁶ Asclepius and Apollo may have been perceived as aspects of the same god, but the healing side of Apollo seems to become separated off into Asclepius cult. Graf notes that this is because Asclepius is a more modern type of healer who supplants Apollo,⁷⁷ but it is also possible that there is a certain unwillingness to accept Apollo as a healing god among Athenians for whom the enemy god of the *Iliad* is such a powerful image.

Purification was a feature of the Apollo festival of Thargelia in the form of the expulsion of the *pharmakos*, or scapegoat, which in earlier times would have involved death.⁷⁸ Through

⁷⁴ Price (1999: 109)

⁷⁵ Plut. *Vit. Num.* 4.6. Sophocles wrote the *Hymn to Asc.* (737 PMG) mentioned in Lucian *Encom. Demosth.* 27, Philostr. *VA* 3.17 and *Imag.* 415.7. On Sophocles as *Dexion*, receiver of the cult of Asclepius, see Parker (1996: 184-85).

⁷⁶ Mitchell-Boyask (2008).

⁷⁷ Graf (2009: 94, 101).

⁷⁸ In Ionia and Athens the Thargelia was a pre-harvest festival (*thargelos* was probably a type of bread) held on the 7th of Thargelion (late May) and marking the beginning of the harvest season. The expulsion of the *pharmakos* – a marginal person, sometimes a criminal – was cathartic. In ancient times he may even have been driven out over a cliff. The second day saw the taking round of the *eirisione* or decorated branches and the cooking of the meal, as the expulsion of impurity was followed by the celebration of new life. See Farnell (1907, vol. 4: 268ff.), Burkert (1985: 265), Parke (1977: 146-49), Simon (1983: 76-79). Ancient sources include Plut. *Vit. Thes.* 22 and 4.717D; Harp. *FgrH* 334f50; Philoch. *FgrH* 328f61. See also inscription *IG*.2² 1138. The idea of a ‘scapegoat’ theme in *OT* is well covered in Vernant (1990).

the *pharmakos*, impurity was driven from the city to enable new life, and this is actively drawn on in *OT*. The spectators' knowledge of the festival is utilised from the beginning: Vernant notes the reference to the *eirisione* (see n. 78) in the second line.⁷⁹ κλάδος is a branch or shoot:

τίνας ποθ' ἔδρας τάσδε μοι θαάζετε
ἱκτηρίοις κλάδοισιν ἐξεστεμμένοι. (2-3)

OT's reference to the Thargelia subverts the ritual and its provision of closure – after the expulsion of the *pharmakos* the festival continued into the next day with activities which suggested the inevitability of new life. In *OT* Oedipus asks to be expelled (1289, 1410, 1436, 1518)⁸⁰ but, at the end of the play, he does not actually become a scapegoat;⁸¹ here the ending is left open, and there has been much discussion of the meaning of this, including on the question of the validity of the text.⁸² This open ending does not allow certain judgement of Oedipus' fate.

The uncertain role of Apollo as plague-sender and healer in *OT* echoes the ambivalent presentation of Apollo as a healer in Aeschylus, and the status of his cult in 420s Athens. In

⁷⁹ Vernant (1990: 129-30).

⁸⁰ On Oedipus as a scapegoat see Girard (1986), Vernant (1990). On scapegoat rituals see Bremmer (1983). Most of the known versions do not have exile for Oedipus: Homer at *Il.* 23.678-80; *Od.* 11.271-80 (the *Nekiya*); Hes. fr. 24 (Most, 2007); Hes. *Op.* 162-63; In the Theban epic *Oedipodeia* there is no exile for Oedipus. In the schol. on Eur. *Phoin.* 1760, Oedipus stayed on the throne. Some versions do have Oedipus as an outcast: see the *Thebaid* n. 4 above. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.268-69 possibly shows Oedipus already as an exile.

⁸¹ See Seaford (1994: xv) on tragic perversion of ritual.

⁸² See Bowra (1944: 172), Taplin (1978: 45ff.), Revermann (2003: 795-97.), Segal (2001: 120), Roberts (1988; 2005: 136-48), Budelmann (2006: 44, 55), Burian (2009: 99-118).

making references to festivals where Apollo *does* have healing involvement, the tragic open ending subverts their closure and adds further to the enigma of Apollo and his involvement in the events of the story and the fate of Oedipus.

Conclusion

The potential of Apollo's oracle for plot and human drama is evident throughout tragedy. In *OT* we have also seen its potential in the treatment of new and complex philosophical questions. Sophocles' use of Apollo is as a focus in engagement with new ideas but is still embedded in tragic tradition. In both Apollo's oracular function and as the plague god, Sophocles reveals intertextual relationships with both Homer and the *Oresteia*. We see the dark side of the Delphi of *Choephoroi* and the plague-sending god of the *Iliad* and *Agamemnon*. Sophocles' distinctive approach combines the traditional and the new as he places Apollo at the centre of his engagement with spectators' awareness of intellectual changes and new aspects of the socio-political context while still expressing the dark side and the mysteries of the divine world.

Electra

In *Electra*, in Sophocles' treatment of a different myth, we also see a combination of rationalist thinking and dark forces in the presentation of Apollo. The morality of the matricide itself is open to debate.⁸³ There is a shift of focus from the Apollo/Orestes

⁸³ Jebb (1894) and March (2001) find it is presented as just. Sheppard (1918, 1927 and 1927b) and Kells (1973) find it is presented ironically – implying doubts.

relationship onto human motivation and the experience of a vengeful Electra which acts to exonerate Apollo somewhat.⁸⁴ However, Sophocles also makes thematically significant reference to traditional aspects of the god, notably to a fearsome Apollo *Lykeios*, mentioned here more times than in any other extant play, which has the effect of giving his Apollo a darker moral role than is often seen.

The play will be examined in four sections. The first section will discuss the effect of the highly ambiguous matricide command in this play. The second will examine how the presentation of the human figures functions in the characterisation of an Apollo who is largely absent from the text. Next, the use of Apollo *Lykeios* will be examined and this will include comparison with its use in Aeschylus. The final section will look at how *Electra*, like *OT*, has a strikingly inconclusive ending which here means that the questions of Apollo's involvement in the matricide and his justice remain enigmatic.

The ambiguous matricide command

The highly ambiguous instruction to Orestes to commit matricide in *Electra* leaves both its morality and the exact nature of Apollo's involvement open to debate. This ambiguity is not found in any other version (although Euripides' *Electra* leaves it vague). It has often been noted that Apollo only tells Orestes *how* to do the murder; he does not actually command him to do it:⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See, for example, March (2001: 15ff.) who takes a positive view of Apollo's role in *El*.

⁸⁵ Sheppard's view (1927, 1927b) was that, as an impious Orestes only asks 'how' when he should have asked 'whether', Apollo gives him deliberately misleading advice as punishment. This is challenged by, e.g.,

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤνιχ' ἰκόμην τὸ Πυθικὸν
μαντεῖον, ὥς μάθοιμ' ὅτῳ τρόπῳ πατρὶ
δίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα,
χρῆι μοι τοιαῦθ' ὁ Φοῖβος ὦν πεύσῃ τάχα·
ἄσκειον αὐτὸν ἀσπίδων τε καὶ στρατοῦ
δόλοισι κλέψαι χειρὸς ἐνδίκου σφαγᾶς. (32-37)

Orestes, as in *Choephoroi*, has his own motivations for committing the murder and he goes to Delphi to learn *how* to carry it out. However, even if Apollo only tells Orestes how to commit the murder, there is no suggestion that he did not approve it. Apollo has said that the matricide will be ἐνδίκου (37). The instruction is ambiguous for the reader, or spectator, but not for Orestes who clearly believes that he acts under divine command.

We do not see in this play, however, the violent persuasion of Orestes by Apollo which was such a striking feature of *Choephoroi* (269-96). This does not necessarily suggest a more moral god; rather, as will be discussed further in the next section on the characters, there is a shift towards a focus on human motivation as the dramatic centre of the play.

Presentation of the characters

This section will discuss the effect of the presentation of the human characters on the issue of the justice of the matricide and on the presentation of Apollo.

Finglass (2007 ad loc.) as the idea of Apollo's advice being misleading is not supported by the text. See further debate in Kells (1973: 4-5), Stevens (1978: 111ff.), Segal (1966: 482), Hogan (1991 ad loc.), Winnington-Ingram (1980: 229).

Electra

The play focuses on Electra and on the way all the other characters relate to her.⁸⁶ Electra is central from her entrance and is on stage for well over ninety per cent of the play.⁸⁷ Her *agon* with Clytemnestra (516-633) is prominent and the recognition scene is placed very late (Orestes is not revealed to her until 1224). Orestes carries out the murder but Electra reports it, placing the focus on *her* experience of events.

The presentation of Chrysothemis and the Chorus, and their support of Electra, have the effect of justifying her actions.⁸⁸ The Chorus support the justice of Electra's action (472ff. and 1058-97) but question her excessive emotion (121ff.) and her taking of matters into her own hands, telling her to heed Chrysothemis (1015). Support of the protagonists is a feature of the Chorus here, as it will be in Euripides' *Electra* and *Orestes*.⁸⁹ As Orestes comes out after the murder of Clytemnestra, they say that they can find no fault with the deed (1423). They never condemn the matricide and are hostile to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (195ff.). Lloyd notes that the Chorus' support is an apparent argument in favour of the 'affirmative' interpretation of the play – that the revenge is just.⁹⁰ Choruses, of

⁸⁶ See Winnington-Ingram (1980: 228) and Grene (1957, Intro.: 123) who sees Electra as a combination of reactions to others' deeds and words.

⁸⁷ As noted by March (2001: 11).

⁸⁸ The justice of the action is possibly suggested by the fact that, as Segal (1985: 19) notes, the physical details of the murder are not dwelt on, especially those to do with motherhood.

⁸⁹ Battezzato (2005: 157) notes that in the plays that stage the myth of Orestes (Aesch. *Cho.*, Soph. *El.* and Eur. *El.* and *Or.*), the relationship between Chorus and protagonists is one of basic sympathy.

⁹⁰ Lloyd (2005: 74).

course, do not represent a final authority,⁹¹ especially as here where they are women, but their lack of criticism or questioning is still notable. Chrysothemis too supports Electra's justice (338-39) but opposes her excessive emotion (331, 375), and independent actions (328-30), proposing common sense (394) and the need to yield to authority (396).

It is also possible that the unfavourable characterisation of Clytemnestra helps to justify the murder. She celebrates her husband's death with a festival (277-81). In her prayer to Apollo (discussed further in the section on Apollo *Lykeios* below) she concentrates on her own material well-being and Orestes' death. She does gain some sympathy over the killing of Iphigenia (530ff.), but the main motive for her crime was more likely her affair with Aegisthus (Electra's accusations at 558-609 are convincing).

As Electra is not directly commanded by the god, the effect on the presentation of Apollo is to move him out of the centre of the mythic narrative and to shift focus onto human motives and the effects of revenge on an individual. This may seem to cast Apollo in a more positive light and, in fact, Electra is more vindictive than Orestes *without* the influence of Apollo as a driving force. When she thinks Orestes is dead she plans murder herself (947ff.). She is complex, representing the self-destructiveness of revenge and, possibly, neurosis and self-indulgence (see the exchange with the Chorus at 121ff. and see 182ff. and 213ff.). She does suffer, even heroically, but her suffering is not directly caused by Apollo.

⁹¹ See Parker (2009: 134) that choral utterances have no general claim to authority.

The absence of Apollo's influence on Electra is also seen in how Sophocles, as in *OT*, presents the god as one force among others in another complex version of the tragic model of divine/human responsibility. Electra seems to be more closely involved with Zeus than with Apollo. She is pious (433-36 and 1096) to 'God' or Zeus. The Chorus in support of and in response to Electra mention Zeus three times (175, 823, 1063) and they praise her for her prayer to the god (1097). Electra does pray to Apollo just before the murder (1376-83) but this acts more as a reminder of his involvement with Orestes as it is he who will carry out the deed. Electra prays to Hades, Hermes of the underworld and the Furies (110-112), who may also be referred to in these lines:

...ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς
πολλή 'στ' ἀνάγκη κάπιτηδεύειν κακά. (308-9)

Winnington-Ingram suggests that these forces are probably the Furies, Electra being both their victim and agent (112).⁹² It may be so, although the suggestion is vague. Still, the overall effect is that Apollo is not the only supernatural force here.

Orestes

While Sophocles' *Electra* has a close intertextual relationship with the *Oresteia*,⁹³ it has different emphases, one of these being the shift away from the centrality of Orestes.

Sophocles does not include his madness or his torment by the Furies of his mother;⁹⁴ there is no purification and no trial. Orestes is more dispassionate here; indeed, there seems to be little interest in his emotional experience.⁹⁵ This differs notably from his characterisation in

⁹² Winnington-Ingram (1980: 225, 239).

⁹³ See Lloyd (2005: 30).

⁹⁴ Although there are Furies of the father (110-16, 275-76, 489-90, 1079-80, 1388).

⁹⁵ Winnington-Ingram (1980: 229) finds him 'purposeful and efficient and given to military language'.

Euripides' *Electra* and *Orestes* (see especially 69-72, 1505-7, 73-76, 1288-95, 1372-75, 1491-1502). He is possibly less effective, indecisive even, although this may represent Electra's view (303, 163ff, 319). The marginalisation of Orestes has an effect on the portrayal of Apollo. We do not see him as the punishing god of *Choephoroi* or as the god blamed for Orestes' suffering in Euripides' versions of the myth. This Orestes suffers less and makes fewer accusations of Apollo. After killing Clytemnestra and being asked by Electra how the situation is, he replies:

ἐν δόμοισι μὲν
καλῶς, Ἀπόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἐθέσπισεν. (1424-25)

This is the nearest to any direct expression of doubt about Apollo in this play and it does not seriously question him.⁹⁶ This has the effect of exonerating the god further; he does appear more benign to some extent because he is not the focus for constant condemnation. This is in marked contrast to Euripides' *Electra* and spectators would be likely to notice it as one of the differences between two plays which treat such similar material.

Furthermore, greater importance is given here to human persuasion – that of Pylades and the tutor – than to that of Apollo. The tutor urges Orestes on repeatedly. At 15-22 we see he has in fact raised Orestes to avenge his father (and see 82-85, 1326-38, 1364-71). He has a showpiece scene where, after Clytemnestra's prayer to Apollo asking for Orestes' death, he makes the speech about Orestes' false death. This is his own plan and the scene draws attention to him and his role. Pylades, although a silent character, would be a

⁹⁶ See support for this view in Stevens (1978: 113), Macleod (2001: 173), Finglass (2007 ad loc.). Note though Lloyd's comment (2005: 106) that 'Orestes may be confident but his formulation acknowledges the element of doubt which attends all statements about the god.'

constant presence on stage with him⁹⁷ (see further on Pylades' roles in tragedy in Chapter 6, p. 204).

The tragic model of divine/human responsibility in *Electra* still has the divine element, but the focus seems very much to be shifted further onto human motivation and emotional experience, specifically the effect of hatred on an individual and the self-destructiveness of revenge. The justice of the matricide is less of a focus, the audience possibly being led to accept its basic justice and to consider the complexities that arise from it. Apollo does not cause apparent suffering for Orestes, and Electra suffers independently of the god's influence. Apollo seems somewhat sidelined and to carry less moral responsibility. However, he is still very much a power in this play, and his morality is still questioned as we will see in the next section.

Old fears: Apollo *Lykeios*

In *Electra*, Apollo's pervasiveness and fearsomeness are evoked strongly by the use of his role as *Lykeios* (7, 645, 655, 1379). References to Apollo *Lykeios* are of course made by characters but they never say what it means or suggests. Sophocles could be said to utilise the audience's familiarity with the wolf-like (and possibly other) associations of the epithet in cult and other literature (a technique seen very much in Aeschylus but hardly found in Euripides). Apollo does not appear on stage and characters hardly ever criticise him (this latter aspect is again in marked contrast to Euripides in *IT*, *Alcestis* and *Ion* and, especially,

⁹⁷ Lloyd (2005: 35-36) notes that Pylades is the outstanding example in myth of the ideal friend and that his constant presence should not be forgotten.

in *Electra* and *Orestes*), so this association is an important way in which Sophocles' Apollo is characterised.

The first reference to Apollo, by the tutor in the *agora* at Argos, is as *Lykeios*:

αὕτη δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ
ἀγορὰ Λύκειος. (6-7)

These *lyk-* prefixed words have been discussed previously. Here the tutor's use of Λύκειος along with λυκοκτόνος suggests that Λύκειος here is specifically seen as wolf-god. First, the use of Apollo *Lykeios* probably makes a literal reference to the fact that he was an important god at Argos where there was an Apollo *Lykeios* sanctuary in the *agora* (See Chapter 2, n. 85). The likelihood of audience awareness of this aspect was discussed in Chapter 2, where it was also noted that the literal setting is not the only issue.

Segal comments on the note of violence created by the uses of the wolf epithet which will dominate the play.⁹⁸ He notes that there are three appeals to Apollo *Lykeios* at three critical points which invoke the god as ambiguous and destructive. This is an important aspect of his characterisation here, although we cannot limit the suggestions of the word to 'wolf-like' with any certainty and there will be further discussion about what else it might suggest for an Athenian audience. 'Wolf-like', however, does seem to be the main suggestion. The scholion to line 6 says that Apollo is a killer of wolves because he is the protector of flocks and has wolves dedicated to him.⁹⁹ *Lykeios* is unlikely to suggest

⁹⁸ Segal (1966: 477).

⁹⁹ Gershenson (1991: 10, 16) describes him as patron of wolves and their enemy at the same time, although he also notes that protector of flocks was a limited aspect of Apollo's role in cult generally.

protector from wolves as a shepherd in this context, but it may evoke both ‘wolf-like’ and protector from wolves in the sense that the wolf is Aegisthus – who so far Apollo has protected – and that now Apollo kills the wolf by sending Orestes.¹⁰⁰ It is possible that this involves direct reference to Aeschylus as there is a similar use of *Lykeios* in *Agamemnon* (see Chapter 2, pp. 83-87). If recognised as a reference to Aeschylus (which again depends on the possibility of recent revivals or the availability of texts), it would add layers to the dramatic meaning by echoing the fierce *Lykeios* presented there. This would add resonance to the Apollo/Orestes relationship even though the main focus is on Electra, creating suggestions of Apollo’s ambivalence in his absence.

At important moments Electra and Clytemnestra both appeal to Apollo. They both call on him as Apollo *Lykeios* and address some Apollo artefact on stage. After the *agon*, Clytemnestra prays to Apollo. This may be at an altar or statue. Parker comments that addresses to Apollo on stage suggest an actual emblem of the god but, as here, where offerings are made (634-36) there must also have been an altar.¹⁰¹ Clytemnestra first addresses Apollo in his association with both light and aversion of evil as Φοῖβε προστατήριε (637) – addresses to the god’s benevolent aspects as he is called on for help. Then, like both Cassandra in *Agamemnon* (1256-60) and Jocasta in *OT* (911-23), she addresses Apollo as *Lykeios*.¹⁰² Here, as in both earlier examples, the god addressed at the

¹⁰⁰ As De Roguin notes (1999: 109).

¹⁰¹ Parker (2005: 18). See further discussion in Finglass (2007 ad loc.).

¹⁰² Finglass (2007 ad loc.) also notes how both Jocasta and Clytemnestra, disturbed by events which forebode ill for the royal house, pray to Apollo. A messenger follows both speeches telling of a death that seems to answer their prayers but, their joy is misplaced and they die.

Aguieus altar will be destructive,¹⁰³ again a possible ironic use of this artefact which the audience would associate with protection.

This combination of *Aguieus* and *Lykeios* may be a tragic tradition; the association is not one we know of in cult where it seems to represent two different sides of Apollo – protector of the house and the wolf-like god of ephebes and military training in the *Lykeion*.¹⁰⁴

Cassandra also addresses Apollo as both *Aguieus* and *Lykeios* at the *Aguieus* altar in *Agamemnon* (1081, 1257) which suggests that these two aspects have particular resonance for the Athenian audience:

ἃ γὰρ προσεῖδον νυκτὶ τῇδε φάσματα
δισσῶν ὀνείρων, ταῦτά μοι, Λύκει' ἀναξ,
εἰ μὲν πέφησεν ἐσθλά, δὸς τελεσφόρα,
εἰ δ' ἐχθρά, τοῖς ἐχθροῖσιν ἔμπαλιν μέθες. (644-47)

There is a strong likelihood that ‘wolf’ is the primary meaning here, both because of the clear suggestion in the opening lines that *Lykeios* is *lykoktonos* and because (as with Cassandra and Jocasta) she is calling on a god about to destroy her (here by having sent Orestes). The word may have carried Lycian associations (Lloyd-Jones translates as ‘Lycian’) if Apollo were thought of as Lycian. I argued in Chapter 1 that this was unlikely as arguments for Lycian Apollo as a fourth-century cult are convincing, if not certain. If it were true, another strong layer of ambivalence would be added by this association of Lycia/Apollo and Troy. What does seem likely here is at least a secondary suggestion of

¹⁰³ De Roguin (1999: 111) notes how these prayers to Apollo *Lykeios* generally lead immediately after to death or ‘profond malheur’ for those praying.

¹⁰⁴ Mikalson (1989: 83, n. 9) comments that Sophocles’ association of *Aguieus* and *Lykeios* may reflect cult realities or may result from a literary adaptation.

lyk- as light, echoing the ‘Phoebus’ at 637,¹⁰⁵ the evocation of both light and wolf-like suggesting the contrast between what she will get as opposed to what is hoped for:

ταῦτ’, ὦ Λύκει’ Ἀπολλων, ἵλεως κλυὼν
δὸς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐξαιτούμεθα. (655-56)

Clytemnestra probably means the death of Orestes. As such this makes for effective dramatic irony as we see next the false announcement of his death (673). Apollo *Lykeios* has not granted Orestes’ death; indeed, Orestes will kill her. Stevens comments that others are right to note that this is ‘Apollo’s answer to a wicked prayer and an indication of the divine will’.¹⁰⁶ It does seem so – she is about to die and not to have her prayer answered.

At 1376ff. Electra also prays to either a statue of Apollo or to the *Aguieus* altar on stage.

Again it is not certain from the text: Orestes has said ἔδη (1374) which can mean ‘seat’ (as translated literally by Lloyd-Jones) but also ‘altar’ or ‘statue’ (among others):¹⁰⁷

ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, ἵλεως αὐτοῖν κλύε,
ἐμοῦ τε πρὸς τούτοισιν, ἥ σε πολλὰ δὴ
ἄφ’ ὧν ἔχοιμι λιπαρεῖ προὔστην χερί.
νῦν δ’, ὦ Λύκει’ Ἀπολλων, ἐξ οἷων ἔχω
αἰτῶ, προπίτνω, λίσσομαι, γενοῦ πρόφρων
ἡμῖν ἄρωγος τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων
καὶ δεῖξον ἀνθρώποισι τάπιτίμια
τῆς δυσσεβείας οἷα δωροῦνται θεοί. (1376-83)

¹⁰⁵ Hogan (1991) argues for the translation of the *Lykeios* here as ‘light’ as at *OT* 919. Segal (1966: 477)

notes that this, although the main meaning is wolf, possibly draws on the other meaning of the *lyk-* prefix as light.

¹⁰⁶ Stevens (1978: 114).

¹⁰⁷ Jebb (1885, on *OT* 886): δαιμόνων ἔδη are ‘images of gods, whether sitting or standing... placed in a temple or holy place as objects of worship.’

This is the only example we have of characters petitioning the same deity for different purposes;¹⁰⁸ this suggests that it is meant to invite comparison, and similarities to Clytemnestra's prayer at 655-56, 1376 and 1379-80 have been noted.¹⁰⁹ Finglass comments that this points to 'the obvious and significant difference: that while Clytemnestra's prayer was a masterpiece of wickedness, Electra's petition is a truly pious one which the god will now bring to a successful end'.¹¹⁰ I do not find the difference quite as marked as this. Clytemnestra's prayer *does* centre around material issues, her own welfare (especially at 648-53), and asking for the death of her son.¹¹¹ Electra's prayer is for just revenge and her address seems more pious,¹¹² but the parallels mentioned above could suggest moral similarities as much as differences; Electra *is* about to commit matricide, even if it is justified.¹¹³

However, Apollo certainly answers Electra's prayer and not that of Clytemnestra who immediately after this is killed by Orestes. The main suggestions of Sophocles' use of *Lykeios* seem to be that Apollo is both wolf-like and destroyer of wolves. The god is wolf-

¹⁰⁸ Mikalson (1989: 87-88).

¹⁰⁹ Mikalson (1989: 89).

¹¹⁰ Finglass (2007 ad loc.).

¹¹¹ Mikalson (1989: 89-90) notes that material requests are commonplace in 5th-century religion, cf. Orestes' prayer at 67-72, but praying for the death of one's son would trouble an ancient audience.

¹¹² See Pulleyn (1997: 200-3) that prayers often remind the deity of the need to uphold justice and right conduct.

¹¹³ Segal (1966: 501) notes a suggestion that she shares something of her mother's sinister nature in her cry at the matricide (1415) with its verbal echoes of Ag. (1343-45) in 'one of the boldest borrowings in Greek literature.'

like as patron of Orestes and Electra (as in the *Oresteia*), destroying the, also wolf-like, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. In the absence of characters' direct comments on Apollo, such associations are the chief way in which his ambivalence is suggested here, and the very ambivalence of the word itself with its possible multiple suggestions adds further to this. I note the continuing power of the associations of the word *Lykeios* which is not found in Euripides' plays. It has the effect, surprising among Sophocles' gods, of characterising his Apollo more specifically than Euripides does his.

The ending: justice and resolution?

As in *OT*, the questions of justice and moral responsibility remain unresolved. It does seem that in this version of the Orestes story just order is re-asserted at the end. Indeed, Orestes who had come 'in justice [δίκη] sent by the gods' (70) is restored to his rightful role.

However, we can note from the passage at 32-37, discussed above, Apollo's phrase – ἐνδίκου σφαγᾶς. As noted there, ἐνδίκου underlines that Apollo finds this just but σφαγᾶς suggests slaughter or butchery and, specifically, 'cut their throats' in this condensed phrasing of his combination of savagery and justice. Orestes' final comments also suggest a savage justice:

χρῆν δ' εὐθὺς εἶναι τήνδε τοῖς πᾶσιν δίκην,
ὅστις πέρα πράσσειν γε τῶν νόμων θέλοι,
κτείνειν· τὸ γὰρ πανοῦργον οὐκ ἂν ᾔην πολὺ. (1505-7) ¹¹⁴

The Chorus' final comment suggests a more benign justice:

¹¹⁴ Depending to some extent on how we interpret the word *dike*. Cf. March's 'punishment' for *dike* with Grene's 'justice'.

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως, ὥς πολλὰ παθὸν
δι' ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἐξῆλθες
τῇ νῦν ὁρμῇ τελεωθέν. (1508-10)

The text at the end though is uncertain; there is possibly later interpolation and the play may actually have ended sooner.¹¹⁵ As it stands it is certainly an open ending. It is suspenseful, leaving the audience expecting the murder of Aegisthus. In the sense that, as Roberts notes,¹¹⁶ 'In each of Sophocles' extant plays there is a reference to the future beyond the events of the play' it is also typical of Sophocles. *Electra* is unique however: it is an ending which plays with convention. As Lloyd comments,¹¹⁷ there is no parallel in extant tragedy for a play ending with something significant about to happen inside the *skēnē*.

Here it powerfully undercuts the Chorus' statement of completion and this raises other possibilities. One of these is a forecast that the Furies will come, an idea which may be suggested in Aegisthus' line:

ἦ πᾶς' ἀνάγκη τήνδε τὴν στέγην ἰδεῖν
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακά; (1497-98)

This would undercut the final justice of the matricide because it suggests that punishment *will* come, but it is vague and uncertain; indeed, March finds no suggestion of it in the text.¹¹⁸ What is certain is that the effect of the ending coming at this point in the story is that Apollo's role is reduced. He can play no part in the resolution. No pursuit by Furies

¹¹⁵ See Finglass (2007). March (2001 on 1505-7) notes different views on the authenticity and importance of the passage.

¹¹⁶ Roberts (1988: 188).

¹¹⁷ Lloyd (2005: 114).

¹¹⁸ March (2001, Intro.: 16 and on 1498).

means ‘no Delphi, no Athens, no Areopagus, no acquittal, and above all – no reconciliation of the Furies by the persuasions of Athena’.¹¹⁹ So there is still a strong sense of a moral questioning of Apollo here. His may have been a necessary, but it is certainly a savage, justice, as suggested especially by the prominence of the wolf-god motif, and the play deprives him of a role in the resolution.

Conclusion

We have seen how, in both *OT* and *Electra*, Sophocles uses oracular Apollo in his engagement with aspects of contemporary thought while clearly working within tragic tradition in his evocation, using other aspects of the god, of the dark side of the divine. Indeed, an important point in this chapter has been that god of the oracle is not Apollo’s only important role, and not the only source of his tragic ambivalence. We have seen that Apollo *Lykeios*, familiar from Athenian cult and Aeschylean tragedy, is deployed with considerable power and thematic significance here to suggest a fearsome Apollo and a continuing sense of his dark side.

In the next chapter we will see how Euripides also works within tragic tradition while engaging with new aspects of the Athenian context in the creation of Apollo figures. However, as some comments through this chapter have suggested, he does this to very different effect.

¹¹⁹ Winnington-Ingram (1980: 227). See Lloyd (2005: 107).

PART IV: APOLLO IN EURIPIDES

Part IV examines the presentation of Apollo in Euripides. The earliest of these plays, *Alcestris*, was produced twenty years after the *Oresteia*, a time gap which provides the opportunity to look at the significance for the presentation of Apollo of changes in the Athenian cultural and socio-political contexts. The fact that Euripides was a contemporary of Sophocles enables comparison between plays produced at approximately the same time by different tragedians. The high number of extant plays by Euripides also provides the opportunity to show the diversity of Apollo's tragic roles, even within one playwright, and to discuss the reasons for this.

Euripides' gods are often punitive and vengeful (Aphrodite in *Hippolytus*, Hera in *Heracles*, Dionysus in *Bacchae*). The Athenian audience would be familiar with this kind of presentation of the divine world in literature; it had been a feature since Homer, and was a prominent theme in tragedy from Aeschylus onwards and, in this sense, Euripides is traditional.¹ However, there is a deeper questioning in Euripides; we see the playwright's engagement with aspects of the new rationalism in his raising of the issue of 'what if' gods were morally accountable, and in his philosophical questioning of their nature and relevance.

Apollo is particularly prominent in Euripides who may have had a special interest in the

¹ See Yunis (1988, esp. 29-51), Lefkowitz (1987, 1989), Mastronarde (2002, esp. 47-48), Mills (2002: 78, on *Hipp.*).

god.² He is not a focus for a questioning of the nature of the divine; this is more likely to be Zeus (see *Hecuba* 488-91, *Trojan Women* 884-8). He is no more punitive or vengeful than other gods; neither is he liable to interpretation as a representative of a psychological force (as, for example, Aphrodite in *Hippolytus*). Apollo appears in his traditional tragic roles as the oracular and ephebic god and Homeric warrior, and continues to be a focus for a questioning of divine morality and effectiveness, but here in a way characteristic of Euripides as he adapts Apollo to his open, multi-voiced approach. There is a considerable amount of criticism of Apollo but it is often expressed by unreliable commentators;³ and there is notably less use of ‘association’ of the god with mysterious or malign forces than in Aeschylus or Sophocles. Specifically, there is no Apollo *Lykeios* in extant Euripides.

This is not to say that we do not find a ‘dark’ god in Euripides. Chapters 6, 7 and 9 will show the influence on the characterisation of Apollo of the type of play in which he appears. The mood in *Electra* and *Orestes* is bleak and we will see in these plays how their Apollo is a darker god. In the lighter plays, *Alcestis*, *IT* and *Ion*, Apollo’s morality and effectiveness are still challenged, and he still causes human suffering, but his ‘negative’ qualities are significantly offset by the inclusion of more benign aspects. This other side to

² Among the plays not discussed here, *Supp.* and *Phoen.* in treating the Laius myth, have some role for Apollo but he is not as thematically important as in the plays treated here. References to Apollo in other extant plays: *Med.* 3, *Rhes.* 4, *Heracl.* 1, *Hipp.* 1, *Cyc.* 0, *HF* 5, *Hel.* 3, *IA* 2, *Bacch.* 2. (frr. not included).

³ For voiced criticism of the gods see also *Bacch.* (1348), *Hipp.* (12), *Hel.* (18-21), *Her.* (1341-46), as discussed in Swift (2008: 37-38). Mastronarde (2002: 48-49) notes how the rationalism of Euripides’ characters is one aspect of the poet’s appropriation of specialised knowledge – not an endorsement of any particular speculation.

Euripides' Apollo calls into question the idea that he is a playwright who is particularly critical of the god.⁴

Chapter 6: The lighter tragedies 1

***Alcestis* (438), *Iphigenia in Tauris* (414?)⁵**

This chapter will focus on Apollo in two of the lighter tragedies, *Alcestis* and *IT*. As noted in the Introduction, this definition does not mean that the plays lack seriousness but they have themes of escape,⁶ redemption, resolution, and are lighter in tone than the other Euripidean works discussed here.⁷ They focus less on human misery, contain 'comic' episodes and characters (Heracles is more often associated with comedy), exuberant choral passages and have (qualified) happy endings.⁸ (*Ion* is also classed with these lighter plays

⁴ For critical views of Apollo's character in Euripides, see, for example, Vermeule (1959), Willetts (1947, 1973), Arrowsmith (1958: 110), Meltzer (2006: 146-87).

⁵ The hyp. states that *Alc.* was produced during the Archonship of Glaucinus. For *IT*, 414 is an approximation based on the choices of Lattimore (1956) of 414 and Cropp (2000) of 414-13 on stylistic and technical grounds.

⁶ Wright (2005: 124) includes *IT* as an 'escape tragedy' and notes the motif in *Alc.* of an escape from death, although its central concern is Admetus' dilemma.

⁷ *Alcestis* has been defined as pro-satyrical, although this is debated. See Conacher (1988: 35ff.), Marshall (2000: 229), Parker (2007: xxi). A 5th-century audience, of course, would still have seen these plays as tragedies.

⁸ The hyp. to *Alc.* describes this denouement as 'rather of the comic type.' See Arist. *Poet.* 1453a.30ff: this type of plot where good end happily and bad end unhappily gives a pleasure which is not appropriate to tragedy but to comedy. See further in Parker (2007: xxi).

but is dealt with in a separate chapter because its Apollo plays a larger role, and because it develops further some themes and techniques involved in his presentation in *Alcestis* and *IT*.)

As noted above, one of the aims of this thesis is to show the variety in dramatic representations of Apollo and the different reasons for this. Here we will see how the lighter tone and more ‘positive’ themes in this group of Euripides’ plays have a notable effect on the characterisation of Apollo. He plays a more benevolent role in the lives of the human characters: his prophecies – escape from death for *Alcestis*, freedom from the Furies for *Orestes* – have an intent clearly more beneficial for humans than those in *Electra* and *Orestes*, and there are choral passages of praise of the god which, I will argue, would have been particularly prominent in performance.

The first two sections will examine passages in both plays which illustrate this more benevolent role, as Apollo’s prophecies are vindicated by the outcome of the plot. Even in these lighter plays, however, questions are raised about Apollo’s efficacy and morality. Next, we will see a dramatic technique exclusive to Euripides’ lighter plays, among extant tragedies, in the choral passages of praise of Apollo. The discussion will focus on the effect for spectators of the combination here of a celebrated Apollo of hymnic and lyric register with the morally questioned god of the human drama. I also consider the, evidently new (and again characteristic of the lighter plays), tragic references to Apollo’s association with music in relation to aspects of the performance and wider cultural contexts. Finally, we will see again how Apollo’s remoteness or absence become problematic in tragedy, in the sense of suggesting ineffectiveness, especially at the endings of the plays. In Euripides

this remoteness resonates more widely, expressing the unbridgeable distance between human and divine and the irrelevance of gods to human problems.

Apollo versus Death

Apollo displays strengths and skill in *Alcestis* but also, in two particular ways, reveals limitations: doubts are suggested about his power and he lacks foresight. We have seen such limitations in tragic Apollo previously. Here they operate within new themes as, in apparent engagement with aspects of sophist rationalism, Euripides raises the question of the limitations of gods generally in the face of human problems, especially in the face of death, a major theme of the play.

Apollo tells in the prologue how Zeus had killed his son Asclepius (as punishment for his raising the dead from Hades);⁹ Apollo in revenge killed the Cyclops, and Zeus has sent him to the house of Admetus to serve for one year as penance. Admetus was to die but the god has cheated the Fates and they will allow someone else to die in his place. Only his wife, Alcestis, is willing to do so.¹⁰ Apollo appears in the play in his authoritative role as god of

⁹ See Mastronarde (2005: 327) who broadly groups the functions of visible gods in tragedy into punishing, saving and informing. I note that the 'informing' role of Apollo here is the only extant example.

¹⁰ Apollo in the *Alcestis* story: *Il.* 2.763-66 possibly has a reference to Apollo's bondage to Admetus; a schol. to *Alc.* 1. (Hes. fr. 59a, Most) comments that Euripides is following Hesiod and Asclepiades in concerning Apollo's enslavement to Admetus. In Aeschylus there are two passages usually assumed to refer to it: *Supp.* 214 and *Eum.* 723-28. There is also an early 5th-century *Admetus* by Sophocles. Parker notes (2007: xvi to xvii) that Plutarch quotes as the words of Sophocles: 'It was my cock that took him to the mill' (*TrGF* 4, fr. 851), suggesting that this may have referred to Apollo's servitude in that play (and he notes similar conjecture

the oracle; addressing Thanatos, he prophesies that a man will come and rescue Alcestis from death:

ἦ μὴν σὺ πείσῃ¹¹ καίπερ ὤμους ὦν ἄγαν·
ποῖος Φέρητος εἴσι πρὸς δόμους ἀνὴρ
Εὐρυσθέως πέμψαντος ἵππειον μετὰ
ὄχημα Θρήικης ἐκ τόπων δυσχειμέρων,
ὅς δὴ ξενωθείς τοῖσδ' ἐν Ἀδμήτου δόμοις
βίαι γυναῖκα τήνδε σ' ἐξαιρήσεται.
κοῦθ' ἢ παρ' ἡμῶν σοι γενήσεται χάρις
δράσεις θ' ὁμοίως ταῦτ' ἀπεχθήσῃ τ' ἐμοί. (64-71)

This eventually comes true to bring about a happy ending and, meanwhile, adds a positive note to the ensuing action: the audience know that prophecies always come true in tragedy.¹² However, Thanatos, a deity given equal weight with Apollo in this opening scene,¹³ raises doubts about the prophecy:

πόλλ' ἂν σὺ λέξας οὐδὲν ἂν πλέον λάβοις·
ἢ δ' οὖν γυνὴ κάτεισιν εἰς Ἀϊδου δόμους. (72-73)

This creates dramatic anticipation for the audience about what will happen;¹⁴ these lines may not register with the audience now but would perhaps be recalled later. They raise

on lines 770, 911, 953). Although, in the 2nd hyp. to *Alc.* it is said that neither Aeschylus nor Sophocles used the myth.

¹¹ Conacher (1988 on 64) notes that the text adopts Schmidt's correction, πείσῃ – 'you will be persuaded/will obey' for παύσῃ – 'you will cease' of the MSS. He adds that, as Dale notes, πείσῃ contradicts βίαι – by force (69) – unless it is being used ironically.

¹² Parker (2007) notes how the details of this speech (66-67) give weight and clarity to Apollo's announcement, and the audience will enjoy seeing it all come true.

¹³ Noted by Hamilton (1978: 293).

¹⁴ Hamilton (1978) discusses four plays (three of which include Apollo – *Alc.*, *IT* and *Ion* – the fourth being *Hel.*) all of which have a prediction in the prologue which is altered or contradicted in the course of the play

questions about Apollo's foresight and ability to bring his prophecy about (see the prologue, 3-4, which also casts doubt on Apollo's chances: Zeus destroyed Asclepius for raising men from the dead).

Apollo shows both strengths and weaknesses. In depicting both of these Euripides draws on traditional aspects of the god, possibly echoing his role in the *Oresteia* specifically, but deploys them within new themes. There is a question of whether an audience would perceive the *Oresteia* as the primary text as *Alceste* treats a different myth and was produced twenty years later (probably before the likely revival of the *Oresteia* at the Great Dionysia in the later fifth century¹⁵), but close parallels have been found, particularly between Apollo/Thanatos here and Apollo/Furies in *Eumenides*.¹⁶

Apollo is forceful in his final speech to Thanatos (64ff. above). Parker notes, for example, that ἤ μὲν (64) typically 'introduces a strong and confident assertion'¹⁷ with 'not infrequently a touch of menace'; and the speech ends on an assertive note (70-71). Apollo has also used trickery effectively: he cheated the fates to save Admetus' life (10). This recalls *Choephoroi* and the trickery involved in the way the matricide was to be carried out (556) and, in *Eumenides*, Apollo's 'cleverness' at the trial. It was there, and may be here, (278). He notes particularly how these are addressed to the audience. Here the doubt expressed is not heard by other characters in the play (301). Conacher (1988) has Apollo leave after his own speech, thus emphasising that Thanatos speaks for the audience.

¹⁵ Although it is possible that texts were available and that Athenians attended the *deme* drama festivals at which the play may have been revived earlier.

¹⁶ See Parker (2007 ad loc.).

¹⁷ Parker (2007 ad loc. citing Denniston, 1934: 350).

behaviour traditionally associated with ephebes.¹⁸ In *Eumenides* it was more harmful – a command to commit matricide by stealth and a cleverness which is both aggressive and superseded by Athena’s wisdom. Here it is more beneficial in the sense that it is to help his friend.

However, as well as his benign role as the Olympian god versus Death, Apollo reveals a certain ineffectiveness in two ways: his power is limited and he reveals a lack of foresight. Apollo cannot prevent Thanatos from taking Alcestis and must withdraw after their exchange, because of which he has been seen to be presented rather negatively in *Alcestis*.¹⁹ Apollo’s ineffectiveness is evoked in ways which suggest intertextual and interdramatic relationships with the *Oresteia*. The use of the bow makes an interesting contrast with its use in *Eumenides*. Thanatos asks why he is carrying it (39) and Apollo replies (40) that he always does so. This casual reference to a familiar feature is in marked contrast with Apollo’s violent threat to use the bow against the Furies (*Eumenides* 179-84). If characterised differently, the bow is still ineffective against Thanatos as it was inappropriate and irrelevant against the Furies.

Apollo’s language and behaviour generally in *Alcestis* are more restrained than in the *Oresteia*, although the exact tone of his language is open to debate. Observations range

¹⁸ See Bierl (1994: 154, n. 48).

¹⁹ See unfavourable attitudes to Apollo in *Alc.* in Keyes (1929: 206), Hartigan (1991), Nielsen (1976: 94ff.), Gregory (1979: 267), Bradley (1980: 115), Bierl (1994, esp. 83).

from finding it ‘courteous and reasonable’ to ‘jeering and barracking’.²⁰ In the argument with Thanatos (38-63) Apollo opens with:

θάρσει· δίκην τοι καὶ λόγους κεδνοὺς ἔχω. (38)

He says he is helping a friend (42) and he makes reasoned responses (44 and 46), even showing apparent submissiveness to Thanatos (48). Thanatos accuses Apollo of favouring the rich (57), and, in what seems like a contemporary allusion to sophists,²¹ Apollo asks:

πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ’ ἦ καὶ σοφὸς λέληθας ὦν; (58)

If Apollo’s aggressiveness against the Furies in *Eumenides* was less than constructive, here his attempt at persuasion in a different style is also ineffective. This ineffectiveness is a feature of Apollo found elsewhere: Felson notes Apollo’s lack of ability to persuade as typical of his representation in stories.²² Apollo’s inability to defeat Thanatos should also be seen in the light of his traditional absence at the point of death (as in his abrupt leaving of Hector in the *Iliad*). Apollo announces (22) that he must leave lest any pollution – μῖασμα – reaches him. As noted in Chapter 1, Olympian gods are traditionally absent at the point of death.²³ This resonates, therefore, with a particular characteristic of Apollo, but also with the nature of gods generally for whom he becomes the representative. It suggests the limitations and even the irrelevance of the gods in the face of human mortality.

²⁰ See Gregory (1979: 262), Bradley (1980: 114), Hartigan (1991: 21), Parker (2007 ad loc.), Conacher (1988 ad loc.), Nielsen (1976: 95).

²¹ See Conacher (1988 ad loc.).

²² Felson (2009: 149).

²³ See Chapter 1, p. 26. See Artemis in *Hipp.* 1437-39, and *Ant.* 1039-44 where Creon rashly denies that gods are affected by *miasma* (noted by Conacher, 1988, on 22-23). See also Parker (1983: 33).

Apollo is questioned further elsewhere in terms of limits to his healing capacity. The Chorus (962-72) say that nothing is stronger than Ἀνάγκη – Necessity, but probably to be understood as death – including the cures which Apollo gave to the Asclepiads for suffering mortals.²⁴ The god is also called on as *Paian* by the second citizen of the Chorus in the ominous passages before Alcestis' death:

εἰ γὰρ μετακοίμιος ἄτας,
ὦ Παιάν, φανείης. (91-92)

And, just before Alcestis is carried out, we hear:

ὦναξ Παιάν,
ἔξευρε μηχανάν τιν' Ἀδμήτῳ κακῶν. (221-22)

Of course he cannot.²⁵ This presentation of Apollo as an ineffective healer echoes *Agamemnon* in which Aeschylus problematises the healing side of the plague-sender and healer Apollo of the *Iliad*. Here, as in Apollo's inability to defeat Thanatos, it again resonates beyond the god with suggestions of the inescapability of death. Even Zeus can only work *with* Necessity (973ff.) in this play's version of the complex relationship between gods and fate.²⁶

Apollo's prophecy will be vindicated as Heracles comes to rescue Alcestis, but he has not foreseen the problems caused by the kind of help he gives to his host. Suggestions of Apollo's lack of foresight recall the *Iliad* where he does not foresee Greek victory, and have been re-worked in tragedy before (in *Agamemnon*, see Chapter 2, p. 64).

²⁴ On Ἀνάγκη as death, see Parker (2007, on 969-72).

²⁵ Only Asclepius could have helped (122ff.), but of course has been killed.

²⁶ At *Il.* 16.433-38 Zeus does not dare to undo what has been fated for Sarpedon – gods cannot always protect those who are dear to them. See also Chapter 5 n. 62 on gods and fate.

Apollo's gift to Admetus is an element of the theme of *charis* – reciprocity of favours – in this play, but his gift is sometimes seen as something rather negative.²⁷ For one thing, once Alcestis is restored, Admetus now will die, if not immediately.²⁸ His newly acquired sense of acceptance of his mortality and the return of his wife may mean that he has a better life meanwhile; and Apollo is not entirely responsible for the problems caused by his gift – there is the question of how Admetus has used it in allowing his wife to die for him.²⁹ However, Apollo's gift is still highly ambivalent in its effect,³⁰ and his apparent beneficence is cast in an uncertain light. We will see next how this theme of the marked vindication of a benign prophecy, and its questioning, are also found in *IT*.

Vindication by plot in *IT*

Apollo's prophecy, that Orestes will be freed from the torments of the Furies, comes true. Meanwhile, however, the god's effectiveness and morality are challenged through the weight given to doubts expressed about him, especially by Orestes, and through the implication of his suffering being caused by the god. The focus in this play is more on this than on the justice and morality of the matricide itself.

²⁷ See Nielson (1976: 95 and 99), Gregory (1979: 267), Bradley (1980: 115), Hartigan (1991: 20), Padilla (2000: 188-89).

²⁸ As Gregory reminds us (1979: 269).

²⁹ Dellner (2000: 3) sees that *Alc.* is about the gift of a god and what mortals do in the face of it.

³⁰ Seaford (1994: 368) speaks of the 'negative representation of reciprocity' as typical of tragedy.

In *IT* we see a, probably new, combination of the myth of Iphigenia's rescue by Artemis from her sacrificial altar and delivery to Tauris, with the first tragic treatment of the Orestes myth in extant drama since the *Oresteia*.³¹ As for how far the *Oresteia* can be seen as the primary text, there are other versions of the myth, notably in Stesichorus and Pindar, and the possibility of lost versions. However, there is commonly believed to have been a revival of the *Oresteia* in the 420s and there is considerable, sometimes detailed, reference to the trilogy in both Sophocles and Euripides.³² It seems reasonable to assume that the *Oresteia* was the most familiar version of the Orestes myth, and that the audience of the later fifth century would view new versions of the myth through its underlying influence on their perception.³³ Euripides will both draw on and signpost departures from Aeschylus in highly significant ways.

The play is set in the period after Orestes' trial. Apollo has told Orestes that he can stop the Furies who are still pursuing him by going to Tauris and returning a statue of Artemis to Attica. The focus on a new area of the myth creates new emphases in Apollo's role. The play opens with Iphigenia speaking the prologue. As in *Alcestis*, an Apolline prophecy at the beginning forecasts what will eventually be a happy ending. However, questions are

³¹ See Cropp (2000: 46), Wright (2005: 113ff.).

³² Raeburn (2000: 166, n. 12) notes that there is no certain evidence for a revival of the *Oresteia* in the 420s or 410s, but that *Ar. Ach.* 9ff., *Nub.* 534-36 [with its reference to the Electra/Orestes recognition scene] and *Ran.* 868 ff., 1126ff. taken with *Vita Aesch.* 12 ff. make one highly probable. See also Marshall (1996) below, n. 43.

³³ A parallel can be found in Hutcheon's comment (2006: 29), on film versions of well-known books, that 'Palimpsests make for permanent change' in the sense that, after seeing a film adaptation, one's original imagined version cannot be recovered.

raised about it, here by the presentation of two contradictory prophecies: as well as Apollo's prediction that Orestes will find respite from the Furies after recovering the statue (85ff.), there is the dream of Iphigenia (55, 150-52) that Orestes will die. This raises dramatic tension over what will happen. It also creates a highly ambivalent Apollo. He is involved in the positive movement of the plot, casting an optimistic note over proceedings, but meanwhile he is absent and the play focuses on human isolation, vulnerability and suffering – that of Orestes – and for which Apollo is blamed.

The main focus here is on the contrast between the 'positive' direction of the plot and the criticisms and expressions of scepticism made about Apollo by the characters, this being the dynamic that shapes the god in this play. Orestes' suffering is seen from his first long speech where he tells of being hounded by Furies until going to the god and being sent here to Tauris, only to witness more suffering:

ὦ Φοῖβε, ποῖ μ' αὖ τήνδ' ἐς ἄρκυν ἡγάγες. (77)

(See further at 285ff. where the Herdsman describes him fighting off the Furies.)

The audience do not know that his trial has already taken place until 939ff., at which point specific reference is made to *Eumenides*. It is possible that the spectators' familiarity with the Aeschylean version of the myth is drawn on from the beginning;³⁴ *IT* may then have been seen at this early stage to present an alternative to the *Oresteia* in not including a trial. The effect at this point is that audience opinions on Apollo and the part he has played are suspended.

³⁴ See Caldwell (1975), Burnett (1971: 71), Roberts (1984: 103).

The plot moves inexorably towards vindication of Apollo's prophecy but, meanwhile, we see several doubting and accusatory references to the god, made especially by Orestes. When Iphigenia discovers that Orestes is not dead and her dream seems to have been a lie (568-69), Orestes responds:

οὐδ' οἱ σοφοί γε δαίμονες κεκλημένοι
πτηνῶν ὀνείρων εἰσὶν ἀψευδέστεροι.
πολὺς ταραγμὸς ἔν τε τοῖς θεοῖς ἔνι
κἂν τοῖς βροτείοις· ἔν δὲ λυπεῖται μόνον,
ὅτ' οὐκ ἄφρων ὦν μάντεων πεισθεὶς λόγοις
ὄλωλεν ὥς ὄλωλε τοῖσιν εἰδόσιν. (570-75)³⁵

'The gods' (570) also suggests Apollo specifically as the god of whom Orestes has direct experience and of whom, as god of the oracle, wisdom is expected. This raises further questions about Apollo's oracle from the opening of the play: Orestes says the gods are no more infallible than dreams. Iphigenia's dream is now proven false but the audience do not yet know that Apollo's prophecy will come true.

This passage which expresses doubts about Apollo's oracle is followed by Iphigenia's request to Orestes to take the letter to one of her 'loved ones' (578ff.). Such movements in the plot towards the mutual recognition of Orestes and Iphigenia, and Apollo's eventual vindication, repeatedly follow these criticisms of the god.³⁶

³⁵ The text is uncertain and Platnauer (1938 ad loc.) discusses alternatives. Cropp (2000 ad loc.) finds that 572-75 are not actually connected to 570-71. It does seem that Orestes turns from 'gods' to 'seers'. Although see Wright (2005: 369), noting Cropp's comment, but suggesting that the lack of connection may have a point. Incoherence may be a stylistic device (2005: 367, n. 84). Diggle expressed suspicion of 570-75 but leaves them in. Mastronarde (2002: 17, n. 34) finds them relevant to the theme of the play.

³⁶ See Cropp (2000: 31-36 and ad loc.) on the movements of the plot.

Orestes decides to make the sacrifice of staying to die, sending Pylades home in his stead (596ff.). He bids farewell to Pylades and adds:

ἡμᾶς δ' ὁ Φοῖβος μάντις ὦν ἐψεύσατο·
τέχνην δὲ θέμενος ὥς προσώταθ' Ἑλλάδος
ἀπήλασ', αἰδοῖ τῶν πάρος μαντευμάτων.
ὦι πάντ' ἐγὼ δοὺς τάμᾳ καὶ πεισθεὶς λόγοις,
μητέρα κατακτᾶς αὐτὸς ἀνταπόλλυμαι.³⁷ (711-15)

We have to consider the dramatic context and the emotional experience of the character.

Orestes, facing death and feeling deserted by Apollo, turns to accusing him of trickery and of sending him here out of shame – αἰδώς – for his oracle. Apollo has not lied, as we will discover, but he has extended Orestes' suffering. In comparison, Pylades' reply (719-22) both counters Orestes' views and prefigures the coming turn in their fortunes.

Pylades had earlier encouraged Orestes (104-5) in a way which echoes his role in *Choephoroi* (see Chapter 3, p. 96) where he has often been seen as Apollo's representative. Here part of the positive momentum, the role of Pylades shifts in the later, darker versions of the myth along with the thematic treatment of Apollo. In *Electra*, which develops further the scenario of humans deserted by gods, Pylades will be mute, and in *Orestes*, where we see humans acting without divine guidance, he will have the idea of murdering Helen.

³⁷ Note the use of the pun on the name of Apollo and ἀνταπόλλυμαι (see also 975). See Chapter 1, n. 46 on usage of the word. Cropp notes that here it emphasises Apollo's responsibility for Orestes' ruin (2000, on 715).

Orestes expresses further doubt, rejecting Pylades' comforting words. Apollo cannot save him and Iphigenia is arriving:

σίγα· τὰ Φοίβου δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ μ' ἔπη. (723)

Immediately after this speech Iphigenia enters carrying the letter which will lead to the recognition. After the recognition duet Orestes' mood changes:

τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχοῖμεν ἀλλήλων μέτα. (841)

Pylades echoes it:

[σοφῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ταῦτα, μὴ 'κβάντας τύχης,
καιρὸν λαβόντας, ἡδονὰς ἄλλας λαβεῖν.]³⁸ (907-8)

Orestes adds:

καλῶς ἔλεξας· τῇ τύχῃ δ' οἶμαι μέλειν
τοῦδε ξὺν ἡμῖν· ἦν δέ τις πρόθυμος ᾗ,
σθένειν τὸ θεῖον μᾶλλον εἰκότως ἔχει. (909-11)

These comments suggest that, as well as 'chance' and divine power, human effort is important here too. The Greek notion of *tyche* and its relationship to the divine is, like that of fate, not stable.³⁹ Here the suggestion is of various forces working together. The process of redemption in this play involves chance, and positive human effort along with a positive aspect to Apollo's involvement.⁴⁰

Orestes, in this heightened mood, tells the story of his trial (939ff.), recounting now the beneficial things that Apollo did for him. The matricide command itself (939-40) is alluded

³⁸ Diggle notes that these lines were deleted by Dindorf.

³⁹ See alternative views on *tyche* here in Cropp (2000 ad loc.), Wright (2005: 377-79).

⁴⁰ Cropp (2000 ad loc.): 'That divine assistance requires human effort is a commonplace.'

to vaguely; it is not a major focus in this play.⁴¹ Some of the references to a trial appear to be direct allusions to *Eumenides*:⁴²

Φοῖβός μ' ἔσωσε μαρτυρῶν, ἴσας δέ μοι
ψήφους διηρίθμησε Παλλὰς ὠλένηι. (965-67, and see 1470)

The *Oresteia* was produced around forty years earlier but the spectators' recognition of this allusion, possibly because of a recent revival,⁴³ seems assumed here as it is important to Euripides' theme, especially in how, from 970 onwards, the story departs from *Eumenides* in an example of how allusions to Aeschylus point up the differences in his own concepts and themes.⁴⁴

In the *Oresteia* we saw that Apollo's ability to protect Orestes was presented with some scepticism, but Orestes' suffering was eventually ended with the aid of the god's purification and support of him at the trial and, of course, by Athena's decision in his favour. Here the audience find out that the trial has in fact already taken place; some Furies still pursue Orestes afterwards; he has had to appeal to Apollo again and the god has only given him this second chance when he has threatened to kill himself (974-75).

⁴¹ Although, note Thoas' ironic reminder of Apollo's involvement (1174) in his response to Iphigenia's comment that Orestes and Electra killed their mother.

⁴² Although, lines 934-36 refer to an alternative version of the myth where Zeus establishes the court for Ares.

⁴³ See Marshall (1996: 83ff.) on a revival of the *Oresteia* in the 420s as the most likely way the audience would know the text. See also Raeburn in n. 32 above.

⁴⁴ See Hutcheon's comment in her work on literary and filmic adaptations (2006: 22) that audiences of the adaptations 'need memory in order to experience difference as well as similarity.'

We might see a further echo of Aeschylus, or a similar evocation in both tragedians of inherent ambivalences in Apollo's roles as god of the oracle and god of ephebes. The play shows the effect of the delayed outcome of an oracle and represents the extended liminal phase of ephebic initiation.⁴⁵

The pre-trial extension can be seen both as a response to the perceived demand for tragic novelty and as a shift of focus onto a greater emphasis on human experience. The placing at this point of the references to the trial in *Eumenides* raises new dramatic tensions; having seen that Apollo has not been able to remove the threat of the Furies, doubts must be raised as to whether this new command of the god will be effective. On the other hand, at this point the move towards resolution in the plot *has* taken place. Apollo does help Orestes after the trial (compare *Eumenides* where he left immediately after Athena's decision). Orestes already believes that Apollo is now with him (see 909-11 above).

Towards the end of the trial passage Orestes persuades Iphigenia to help him steal the statue. Iphigenia fears both Artemis and the King but Orestes, newly encouraged, says:

γνώμης δ' ἄκουσον· εἰ πρόσαντες ἦν τόδε
'Αρτέμιδι, πῶς ἂν Λοξίας ἐθέσπισεν
κομίσαι μ' ἄγαλμα θεᾶς πόλισμ' ἐς Παλλάδος
< >
καὶ σὸν πρόσωπον εἰσιδεῖν; ἅπαντα γὰρ
συνθεῖς τάδ' εἰς ἓν νόστον ἐλπίζω λαβεῖν. (1012-16)

Here human action, chance and the gods all contribute to the positive momentum as the story is brought to its resolution. Platnauer finds a lacuna after 1014 as Apollo did not

⁴⁵ See Roberts (1984: 102), Bierl (1994: 94).

instruct Orestes to meet Iphigenia.⁴⁶ Cropp finds this over-literal – the meeting is a consequence of Apollo’s instructions and can easily enough be seen as intended by him.⁴⁷ I find that this can be seen as Orestes’ view rather than Apollo’s actual intention.

In the move towards vindication of Apollo and his prophecy in this play, the god has finally brought an end to Orestes’ suffering. Further evidence of this is found at 1386-89 where the Messenger reports a mysterious voice on the ship; this voice is usually taken to be Apollo’s and suggests that he has been involved all along.⁴⁸

Apollo has played some role in the rescue theme but there are still questions raised about the authority of his oracle. Iphigenia prays to Artemis to aid their escape saying:

...ἢ τὸ Λοξίου
οὐκέτι βροτοῖσι διὰ σ’ ἐτήτυμον στόμα. (1084-85)

This makes the oracle seem vulnerable to human opinion. It is a shift, not to rejection of prophecy which is still vindicated in these plays, but to greater emphasis on human involvement in the prophetic process. At lines 120-21 Orestes says:

οὐ γὰρ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γ’ αἴτιος γενήσομαι
πεσεῖν ἄχρηστον θέσφατον. (120-21)

This also suggests some human responsibility for the outcome of the prophecy.⁴⁹ The movement of the plot towards vindication of Apollo could be seen to resonate beyond the

⁴⁶ Platnauer (1938 ad loc.).

⁴⁷ Cropp (2000 ad loc.).

⁴⁸ Cropp (2000 ad loc.) and Mastronarde (2002: 32) see Apollo as the logical assumption here.

⁴⁹ See Roberts (1984: 104): Orestes affirms the dual responsibility of god and man in fulfilling the oracle.

Wright (2005: 368) notes that this is a very unusual image. In the original MS reading (the above is Heath’s

god, to a suggestion of divine inexorability generally. Meanwhile, as the characters' views change and they misinterpret, we see human confusion and lack of understanding of this divine process. This is a typically Euripidean theme in which Apollo as god of the oracle becomes the focus.

Apollo in choral odes

In choral passages in both of these plays, Euripides draws on benign aspects of Apollo more typical of hymns and lyric. There will be discussion of how the passages draw on other literary forms, how they function in tragic plot and themes and how they would work in dramatic performance. The references to a musical Apollo will also be considered in relation to Euripides involvement with the New Music and to Apollo and music performance generally at Athens.

The first example we have is in a short lyric passage in *Alcestis*. It relates to the themes of the play generally in that it is addressed to the house of Admetus which the Chorus praises for being open to guests as it was for Apollo:⁵⁰

ὦ πολύξεινος καὶ ἐλευθέρου ἀνδρὸς αἰεί ποτ' οἶκος,

emendation, adopted by Diggle and Cropp) it is αἰτίος γενήσεται – 'Apollo for his part will not be the cause of the failure of his word.' Platnauer (1938 ad loc.) has this, although he notes that it does not make sense in the context as it is themselves, not the god, who are likely to let the oracle down. Wright prefers the emended version (as do I) as it is a similar sentiment to that of Iphigenia at 1084-85. Cf. *Eum.* 715-16 where we see that this is not a new idea.

⁵⁰ Furley (1999-2000: 193) finds that this hymn 'reminds the audience of the Apolline pole in Admetos' fortunes, opposed to the grim pull of Death on husband and wife.'

σέ τοι καὶ ὁ Πύθιος εὐλύρας Ἀπόλλων
ἡξίωσε ναίειν,
ἔτλα δὲ σοῖσι μηλονόμας
ἐν νομοῖς γενέσθαι,
δοχμιᾶν διὰ κλειτύων
βοσκήμασι σοῖσι συρίζων
ποιμνίτας ὑμεναίους.

σὺν δ' ἐποιμαίνοντο χαρᾷ μελέων βαλῖαι τε λύγκες,
ἔβα δὲ λιποῦς Ὀθρυος νάπαν λεόντων
ἅ δα φοινδὸς ἴλα·
χόρευσε δ' ἅμφι σὰν κιθάραν,
Φοῖβε, ποικιλόθριξ
νεβρὸς ὑψικόμων πέραν
βαίνουσ' ἐλατᾶν σφυρῶι κούφωι,
χαίρους' εὐφροني μολπᾶι. (568-87)

This description of Apollo in a pastoral scene presents a different side of the god from the bow-carrying Apollo of the prologue who confronted Death. Here he is a piper,⁵¹ herder of flocks and protector of sheep, aspects of Apollo which are found in cult and myth but not seen in Aeschylus or to any significant extent in Sophocles.⁵² The dramatic context here may add a note of ambivalence. Although not suggested by the text, spectators may remember that Admetus opens his house to guests while in mourning and that Apollo is here as penance for killing. This clash of lyric and tragic register will be a more prominent aspect in *Ion*.

⁵¹ A more 'rustic instrument' than the lyre (Parker, 2007, on 575-77).

⁵² On Apollo as a herder and protector of flocks, see Graf (2009: 123) who discusses one aspect of Apollo *Lykeios* as wolf-killer, hence protector of flocks and herds against wolves. See Gershenson (1991: 10, 17) on Apollo *Nomios*, a shepherd or protector of flocks, and its relation to *Lykeios*.

In *IT*, in contrast with the doubts and questions about Apollo directly articulated by human characters, but supporting the positive movement of the plot, we also find choral passages which present a very different image of the god. The maidens sing about the taking away of the statue of Artemis:

ὁ Φοῖβός θ' ὁ μάντις ἔχων
κέλαδον ἑπτατόνου λύρας
αἰίδων ἄξει λιπαρὰν
εὖ σ' Ἀθηναίων ἐπὶ γᾶν. (1128-31)

This lyre-playing Apollo, now leading the homecoming, contrasts with the commander of matricide who has sent Orestes so far from home and prolonged his suffering. Although, as in *Alcestis*, it has narrative logic; at the point where this ode appears the tide of the plot has now turned – the three characters have entered the temple to rescue the statue. The ode expresses the positive momentum. Apollo and Artemis are seen together promoting Greek values as Attic gods bringing home the Artemis cult to Attica away from the barbarians and ‘altars where no sheep are slain’ (but where humans are of course; see 72-74 and 1116).

This contrasting image of Apollo is developed further at 1234-82, in the Third Stasimon as Iphigenia is making an escape with the statue, in an extended hymn of praise to Apollo:⁵³

εὐπαις ὁ Λατοῦς γόνος,
ὃν ποτε Δηλιάσιν καρποφόροις γυάλοις
<ἔτικτε>, χρυσοκόμαν
ἐν κιθάραι σοφόν, ὅστ' ἐπὶ τόξων
εὖστοχίαι γάνυται. (1234-39)

Still a child, Apollo kills the serpent who guarded earth's oracle. From then we see:

⁵³ Furley (1999-2000: 197) and Cropp (2000 ad loc.) class this as a hymn.

τρίποδί τ' ἐν χρυσέωι θάσσεις, ἐν ἀψευδεῖ θρόνωι
μαντείας βροτοῖς θεσφάτων νέμων. (1254-55)

But Earth to save the oracle for her daughter, Themis, 'spawned nocturnal dream-
apparitions':

...Γαῖα δὲ τὰν
μαντείων ἀφείλετο τι-
μὰν Φοῖβον φθόνωι θυγατρός. (1267-69)

The baby Apollo goes to Zeus who restores his prize to him:

ἐπὶ δὲ ἔσεισεν κόμαν παῦσαι νυχίους ἐνοπάς,
ὑπὸ δ' ἀλαθοσύναν νυκτωπὸν ἐξεῖλεν βροτῶν,
καὶ τιμὰς πάλιν θῆκε Λοξίαι
πολύανορί τ' ἐν ξενόεντι θρόνωι θάρση βροτοῖς
θεσφάτων ἀοιδαῖς. (1276-83)

This passage is almost entirely celebratory. It has a typically hymnic opening (1234-38), cataloguing the god's virtue and parentage followed by his birth, cult centre and chief attributes.⁵⁴ Apollo is the golden-haired – χρυσοκόμαν – child playing the lyre (1236), and is already powerful as he carries the bow and slays the Python (1252). The balance of Apollo's roles as archer and musician is found in previous literature (see Chapter 1, n. 44), but not in extant tragedy before Euripides.

The hymn comes at a turning point in the narrative and underlines the positive plot movements.⁵⁵ The oracle represents truth; as Cropp notes, the phrase 'undeceiving throne'

⁵⁴ See Cropp (2000 ad loc.). Cropp notes the hymn's similarities to the *Hymn.Hom.Ap.* and to other versions including Alc. *Hymn to Apollo* (fr. 307 Lobel-Page).

⁵⁵ See Dale (1954, on 280ff.) on a convention in tragedy whereby 'a situation is realized first in its lyric, then in its iambic aspect – that is to say, first emotionally, then in its reasoned form.'

(1252) suggests that Orestes has been rightly guided by the god.⁵⁶ Also, as Apollo's prophecy is about to be proven right over Iphigenia's dream, here his prophecy is given precedence by Zeus over 'nocturnal declarations' (1276-82).

The passage may strike an ambivalent note about Apollo in the last lines. Cropp notes here Apollo's ruthlessness in securing his honours and the arbitrariness of his favours.⁵⁷

However, this, and Cropp's comment that Apollo 'now dispenses "encouraging words" to his humble worshippers at his own discretion and for his own aggrandisement',⁵⁸ is, I think, reading too much into the passage of the more 'negative' Apollo seen in the characters' views of the god. Roberts also sees Apollo's victory as a questionable one as the dreams he conquers are not false or even enigmatic as far as we are told (1264-65), and she finds here an Apollo with much less moral authority than the god peacefully established in Aeschylus.⁵⁹ Euripides *does* move away from Aeschylean treatment of the Delphic succession and its peaceful transition;⁶⁰ but Apollo has the support of Zeus and, while it may be that it is power rather than moral authority which is suggested here, the overall effect is assertive and glorifying.

This 'positive' side of Apollo is also seen in how Euripides, unlike Aeschylus, uses the dark, possibly chthonic, aspects of Delphi in contrast to, rather than in association with, the

⁵⁶ Cropp (2000 ad loc.).

⁵⁷ Cropp (2000 ad loc.).

⁵⁸ Cropp (2000: 39).

⁵⁹ Roberts (1984: 107).

⁶⁰ The Delphic succession is not usually peaceful. See Chapter 4, n. 2.

god. Python ἀμφέπει μαντεῖον χθόνιον (1249);⁶¹ he is defeated by the golden-haired infant Apollo who then takes over the golden tripod.

Euripides in fact does not use to any extent the kind of ‘negative’ symbolic suggestion found in Aeschylus. There is a ‘dark’ side to his’ Apollo but it is expressed directly by the characters as the focus shifts onto human experience of the gods. The praise passages are also a significant counter to the idea of Euripides as a playwright who presents a particularly negative Apollo. They reveal rather the use, in the presentation of the god, of a controlled manipulation of different forms of literary expression within the tragic form.

On the question of music, an association between Apollo and the lyre is not found in tragedy before *Alcestis*.⁶² In Chapter 1 (p. 52) the lack of importance of a musical Apollo at Athens was noted (citing Wilson and Rutherford), and also its lack of importance in tragedy (citing Wilson). I see this as an argument for the idea that Apollo’s presentation in tragedy seems to be very much defined by the fact that the plays are produced for an Athenian audience. The inclusion of a musical Apollo in Euripides can be seen partly in terms of the tragedian’s own interests – as an important practitioner of the New Music and as an example of his development of lyric passages generally. It might also be seen in

⁶¹ Although note Cropp (2000, on 1249) that χθόνιον makes good sense in the light of 1259-68 but u - is needed rather than u u - . He notes Collard’s comment that μαντεῖον might unusually be an adjective – ‘oracular’ (cf. *Ion* 130) – and that χθόνιον might have displaced a noun agreeing with it, such as βάθρον ‘precinct’ or πέτρων ‘cave’ or πέδον ‘ground’ (cf. *Cho.* 1036). I note that if it is πέτρων this would also carry underground associations.

⁶² The word εὐλύρας (*Alc.* 570) is unique to Euripides in tragedy (Parker, 2007 on 570-72).

terms of changes in the performance context. A lyre-carrying Apollo *is* a common image on vases in the second half of the fifth century.⁶³ If the lyre and music generally are not important aspects of Apollo at Athens, perhaps the high number of these images of Apollo is related to the number of vases which were produced for export to cities where such cult aspects are more significant.⁶⁴ Similarly in tragedy, therefore, the inclusion of a musical Apollo in the later plays may reveal a response to the perceived demands of a wider audience, one which possibly included visiting foreigners.

We might ask how the characters' negative expressions of opinion and the more celebratory odes would integrate for the audience. Roberts in general privileges Apollo's oracular role in tragedy and underplays other aspects of the god because 'they are almost without exception limited to contexts of choral lyric, monody or prayer'.⁶⁵ However, the story of a play does not dominate a performance as much as it does a reading of the text. Sung passages and prayer would play a more prominent role in the audience's experience of the god in the theatrical context. Even if, as Wright comments, less attention was paid to the actual meaning of the lyrics,⁶⁶ we have to consider, for example, music and how it

⁶³ See Bundrick (2005: 18), Wilson (2004: 282), Solomon (1994: 37). See *LIMC* 2.1: 199-213, 396-98, 411, 450-54.

⁶⁴ See Solomon (1994: 37-46) on the panhellenic myth of Apollo and the lyre. See Graf (2009: 33-51) on the importance of Apollo and music over the rest of Greece.

⁶⁵ Roberts (1984: 81-82).

⁶⁶ Wright (2008: 84).

would enhance the emotional intensity of the odes in performance.⁶⁷ As some scholars have commented, odes have an effect on dramatic mood,⁶⁸ and they do operate on another ‘plane’ to some extent;⁶⁹ but they do not draw attention away from the story entirely, and we have seen how the examples above are highly integrated in both plot and theme.⁷⁰ We cannot know exactly how the audience experienced the combination of story and odes, but the odes do add a powerful note of praise of Apollo in contrast with the characters’ perceptions of a god who causes suffering and deserts his charges. Roberts finds that the humans’ comments on Apollo ‘effectively diminish the god’s stature’ as they are not decisively overturned (as Pentheus’ disbelief in Dionysus is in *Bacchae* by episodes seen and reported).⁷¹ I find that the choral praise adds a voice which counters this.⁷² This polyphonic effect is typical of Euripides, and the voice of the Chorus is not one which is necessarily any more authoritative,⁷³ but the combined effect of condemnation and praise heightens the ambivalence of Apollo.

⁶⁷ Hutcheon (2006: 134) comments on how, further to ‘reader response’, in performance we have to consider the physical and emotional aspect of live performances. Music provokes ‘identification and a strong affective response’.

⁶⁸ See Burian (1997: 199).

⁶⁹ See Conacher (1988 ad loc.), Humphreys (2004: 58), Mastronarde (2010: 150-51).

⁷⁰ Furley (1999-2000: 185-86) discusses how the spectators witness not ‘an actual cult song’ but rather ‘a fictional representation of this activity so familiar to them from everyday life.’ and that, therefore, ‘there are no conspicuous breaks with the dramatic illusion in extant tragedy...’.

⁷¹ Roberts (1984: 106).

⁷² See Mastronarde (2010: 93-98) on the tendency of the audience to identify with the Chorus, and (98-106) on the limits to this.

⁷³ See Battezzato (2005: 150) and Mastronarde (2010: 93-106) on choral authority

Endings: the absent god and his intermediaries

At the end of *IT* it is Athena who appears while Apollo is meaningfully absent. This recalls *Eumenides* (and, as discussed there, echoes their presentation in Homer and their relative status in Athenian cult) but, in Euripides, it is a feature only of the lighter plays where an appearance by Athena represents at least some sense of the resolution which Apollo cannot provide. Here Athena prevents Thoas' pursuit, requests Poseidon to calm the seas and instructs Orestes to establish the Artemis cult at Athens. Papadopoulou comments on this intervention that Athena, goddess of Athens and representative of the divine establishment, here solves an impasse and brings reconciliation.⁷⁴ This is clearly the case and, as it is an *Athenian* cult (1462) which she installs, it would seem her place to do so and that this is not in itself a 'rejection' of Apollo. Roberts finds that Athena has more dignity than Apollo,⁷⁵ but I do not find this necessarily borne out by the text. Her appearance on stage does suggest, however, that she is needed to speak for and explain Apollo here. She says 'It was destined that Orestes should come here through Apollo's oracles, fleeing the Furies' wrath, to convey his sister's person back to Argos...' (1438-40, trans. Cropp). This reminds us that Apollo is still the outsider at Athens, and this is underlined further by the fact that his sister, Artemis, is being installed in Attic cult here, which must have resonated with the spectators' experience of his own marginal cult status at Athens. Wright finds 'a sense of dissatisfaction' in the ending.⁷⁶ I think Athena provides some sense, if not total, of

⁷⁴ Papadopoulou (2001: 302).

⁷⁵ Roberts (1984: 106).

⁷⁶ Wright (2005: 381-82).

closure.⁷⁷ In the plays where *lack* of resolution is clearer we will see that Euripides uses lesser deities (the Dioscuri in *Electra*, Thetis in *Andromache*) or Apollo himself (*Orestes*) at the end.

At the end of *Alcestis*, Apollo is also meaningfully absent; here, as well as this being a traditional characteristic, it resonates with wider suggestions about the nature of the divine. Apollo cannot save Alcestis and withdraws from the action after 71. But Heracles, an important character,⁷⁸ succeeds where Apollo cannot. A figure often ambivalent in tragedy, Heracles is a life-affirming force in this play where he wrestles with Death and wins Alcestis back (1140-42).⁷⁹ To some extent he can be seen as Apollo's agent,⁸⁰ but Apollo has still failed against Death at the beginning and, even if our view is that, if Apollo knows what will happen, he does not have to do anything, he is still upstaged by Heracles who *can* fight and defeat Death (1140-42). It is striking to see a hero succeed where a god cannot,⁸¹ and some scholars have seen the need to explain this in terms of genre, or the mythical

⁷⁷ Mastronarde (2005: 322): 'since inscrutability is an expected feature of the supernatural, even at the end of a tragedy there may remain a residue of doubt, uncertainty or contradictory possibilities.'

⁷⁸ See Bradley (1980: 112-13) on the importance of Heracles as a character in *Alc*.

⁷⁹ Parker comments (2007: xvi) that there is some evidence that Euripides' stage characters, Death and Heracles, were introduced by Phrynichus but that it may have been his invention.

⁸⁰ See Zacharia (2003: 141): he acts as an agent of Apollo, although not his emissary as he is unaware of the god's plan.

⁸¹ This may be emphasised by Bierl's view (1994: 154, n. 48, an idea found in Harrison, 1912: 380) that Apollo as an ephebic god is reflected in Heracles, who also uses deception when persuading Admetus to admit the veiled Alcestis into his house.

origins of the story.⁸² These may be important factors, but we have seen that this ending also resonates with the presentation of Apollo's limitations and need for intermediaries in tragedy generally.

In both of these plays we have seen the wider resonances of Apollo's absence. Traditional attributes of the god are used in engagement with new aspects of the intellectual context, to address new themes of human confusion, isolation and suffering and the inescapability of death.

Conclusion

In these lighter tragedies which we have seen as the innovation of a new tragedian and as a response to demands for dramatic novelty we have also seen a newly benevolent side to the tragic presentation of Apollo. The similarity in the use of the god in the themes of each play is striking and is an argument for the importance of the type of play over that of the socio-political context. *IT* was produced some years later than *Alcestis* – and after the beginning of the Peloponnesian war and the plague – but there is no evidence of a different attitude to Apollo that we could relate to this. If Apollo is criticised more in *IT* he is also praised more.

⁸² Hartigan notes that Heracles can only come and do this because it is a fourth-place play not a tragedy (1991: 36). Conacher (1988: 37) finds that 'the play's resolution is to come from outside the world of traditional mythology'.

However, we have also seen new impetus given to the creation of a complex, ambivalent god in tragedy's engagement with aspects of the new rationalism – the increasing focus on human experience of the divine, especially the weight given to questions, doubts and criticisms – and the god is also seen to cause human suffering. In these two plays we have seen a balance within the different dynamics of plot, odes and dialogue between the positive and negative aspects of Apollo. In the next chapter on *Ion* – a play set at Delphi itself – this balance will be seen to tip somewhat and there is a more incisive questioning of his morality and effectiveness.

Chapter 7: The lighter tragedies 2

Ion (413?)¹

Ion, also defined here as a lighter tragedy because of the tone created by its ‘comic’ elements, its exuberant lyric passages and its ‘happy’ ending, is a particularly important play for the study of Apollo.² It is set at the god’s own sanctuary at Delphi and, although absent from the stage, he is central to its story and themes. Apollo has raped Creusa and she has exposed the child which resulted from their union; in the play we see the god’s apparent plan to return the child, Ion, to his mother and install him as King of Athens and father of the Ionian peoples. At the same time we see, before their final vindication, the thwarting of Apollo’s prophecy and plan by human intervention.

As in *IT* and *Alcestis*, and typically of these three lighter plays, we see in *Ion* certain aspects of the god which are beneficial to humans. There is again a challenging but a final vindication of a benign oracle (the establishment of Ion at Athens), Apollo’s intervention at crucial points in the plot to bring about his prophecy and thus the happy ending, and choral

¹ An uncertain date of 413 is chosen, based on Diggle (1981-94), Lee (1997) and Swift’s choice (2008: 30) of 420-410 based on the handling of metre.

² The presentation of Apollo has often been the focal point for how scholars have interpreted *Ion*. See Verrall above, Introduction, p. 2. Other ‘critics’ of Apollo in *Ion*: Willetts (1958, 1973), Rosenmeyer (1963), Conacher (1967), Sinus (1982), Hartigan (1991). Burnett (1962) in contrast is notably ‘pro’ Apollo. Other views of a ‘positive’ Apollo include Wassermann (1940) and Lloyd (1986). Some commentators, such as Knox (1979) and Gellie (1984: 93), have found the play to be closer to comedy. In recent work on *Ion*, notably that of Zacharia (2003: 103ff.), Swift (2008: 40ff.) and Meltzer (2006), Apollo is still an important focus and the play has still sometimes been seen as highly critical of the god (Meltzer, 2006: 146).

passages of praise of the god which add a significant 'positive' note to his presentation. A further benign element of Apollo in *Ion* is in the use of references to his cult aspects. Here by fathering Ion he is given a central role at Athens as Apollo *Patrōos*, becoming father of the city and the Ionian races. There will be discussion of how this, as well as being a feature of a lighter play, can also be related to changes in the wider Athenian political and socio-cultural contexts as we see how different this usage of Apollo cult is from that in the *Oresteia*.

In *Ion*, though, we see obvious tensions between any positive role for Apollo and the doubts which are raised about the efficacy and morality of the god and his oracle. Recent scholars are still in disagreement as to how deep the questioning of Apollo and his oracle goes in *Ion*.³ This chapter will show that, despite the vindication of Apollo's prophecy, the spectators will have been left with a sense of questioning which is quite profound. *Ion* and *IT* were produced, at the most, within a few years of each other, although we do not know which was the earlier, but some aspects of theme and dramatic technique in *Ion* seem to show a development of Euripides' conceptualisation of Apollo in *IT*. The god's remoteness here is more strongly suggestive of ineffectiveness, more weight is given to the moral questioning of Apollo by the characters, and his absence at the end of the play suggests a more distinct lack of resolution. The question 'what if gods were accountable to human morality?' becomes a more central theme as Euripides uses Apollo in *Ion* in a deeper engagement with rationalist ideas and elements of scepticism in society.

³ Meltzer (2006: 146) finds that the questioning of the truthfulness of Apollo's oracle in *Ion* 'questions the whole mythic worldview of the Greeks'. See in contrast Swift (2008: 40).

The discussion on the play will be in four sections. The first will examine the theme of a benign Apolline oracle which is finally vindicated, as in *Alcestis* and *IT*, but will show how here the doubts and questions raised about it are more serious. Events occur in Apollo's absence and the nature and dramatic meaning of this absence will be discussed. We will also see how in *Ion* the text presents a more incisive criticism of Apollo's morality than in *IT* and *Alcestis*. Second, we will see how Euripides presents, through his characters' views and experiences of Apollo, a more complex and powerful combination of intellectual and emotional criticism of the god than in *Alcestis* and *IT*, and a shift to a more profound tragic engagement with some aspects of contemporary scepticism. Discussion of monodies and choral odes will be included in this section because they are related more closely to the presentation of the characters in this play. Next, the ending will be discussed. The characters' views of Apollo change and now express acceptance. Apollo, however, is absent from the stage and major questions are left unanswered. This, and Athena's somewhat unconvincing defence of the god, provide a much more qualified sense of resolution. Finally, we will see how *Ion* uses aspects of Apollo cult. This is an important theme in the thesis so it is dealt with in a separate section. The 'positive' treatment of certain Apollo cults described above, is considered here as a feature of a lighter play, in relation to changes in the socio-political context (by comparison with their treatment in the *Oresteia*) and in relation to the cultic context, that is, in the light of the evidence for an increased interest in Apollo cult generally in the Athens of the second half of the fifth century.

καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε (*Ion*, 1595)

In the Prologue (1-81) Hermes explains Apollo's intentions and the actions he has taken to bring them about. He tells how:

οὗ παῖδ' Ἐρεχθέως Φοῖβος ἔζευξεν γάμοις
βίαι Κρέουσαν. (10-11)

Creusa exposed the child to his death but Apollo asked for him to be brought to Delphi.

We hear Apollo's own words here requesting Hermes to rescue the child:

ὦ σύγγον', ἐλθὼν λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν (οἶσθα γὰρ θεᾶς πόλιν)
λαβὼν βρέφος νεογνὸν ἐκ κοίλης πέτρας
αὐτῷ σὺν ἄγγει σπαργάνοισί θ' οἷς ἔχει
ἐνεγκε Δελφῶν τὰμὰ πρὸς χρηστήρια
καὶ θεὸς πρὸς αὐταῖς εἰσόδοις δόμων ἐμῶν.
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' (ἐμὸς γὰρ ἐστίν, ὥς εἰδῆις, ὁ παῖς)
ἡμῖν μελήσει. (29-36)

Apollo not only openly admits that the child is his but details such as σπάργανον – swaddling cloth – and the instruction to leave the baby at the door of his temple, underline both his intentions and the care he has taken to bring them about. Hermes says that Apollo is controlling everything: 'and the god helped to prevent the child from being cast out of the temple' (47-48, trans. Lee); and he tells us of Creusa and Xuthus:

...Λοξίας δὲ τὴν τύχην
ἐς τοῦτ' ἐλαύνει, κοῦ λέληθεν, ὥς δοκεῖ.
δώσει γὰρ εἰσελθόντι μαντεῖον τόδε
Ξούθωι τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδα καὶ πεφυκέναι
κείνου σφε φήσει, μητρὸς ὥς ἐλθὼν δόμους
γνωσθῇ Κρεούσῃ καὶ γάμοι τε Λοξίου
κρυπτοὶ γένωνται παῖς τ' ἔχη τὰ πρόσφορα.
Ἴωνα δ' αὐτόν, κτίστορ' Ἀσιάδος χθονός,
ὄνομα κεκλήσθαι θήσεται καθ' Ἑλλάδα. (67-75)

However, Apollo's effectiveness is challenged by the way in which the plot turns away from what he has prophesied. The prediction at 71-72 that, after going to his mother's house, he will be recognised by Creusa does not in fact come true. Human interference changes the whole proceedings. The Chorus initiate the misfortunes (774) by revealing to Creusa and the Old Man that Apollo has given a child to Xuthus – a revelation which is intended to cause Ion's death (720) and after Xuthus has ordered them to say nothing (666-7) (an example of a Chorus influencing the action to an unusual degree in extant tragedy⁴). The old man also carries some responsibility in that he goads Creusa to revenge (843, 976, 978).

There is the question of whether Apollo's actions have been effective all along in bringing about reconciliation, and of whether the idea that the establishment of Ion at Athens is for a 'good' purpose makes a difference. Athena will say at the end that Apollo has made everything well (1595), and there is evidence that technically he *has* had a strategy. He has arranged for the child to be looked after (29ff.). Particularly important in this is the role of the Pythia (1320ff.), to some extent the representative of Apollo as she has saved Ion's cradle, an idea which Apollo put into her mind (1347). She tells the audience she is Apollo's priestess and how she was chosen (1320-23). This is information for the *audience*; as Lee notes, she is addressing Ion who would already know these things.⁵ The way she addresses Ion – ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ (1320) – and his reply – ὦ φίλη μοι μήτερ

⁴ Lee (1997 ad loc.) notes, on how they ignore Xuthus' command of silence, that this makes the Chorus 'fully one of the actors.'

⁵ Lee (1997 ad loc.).

(1324) – suggests her role as substitute parent, while 1360-64 may also suggest that Apollo is speaking through her.

However, despite such plans and as Athena reports (1562-65), Apollo had been foiled to some extent. Things may come right in the end but in another way than the god had prophesied. Athena tells Ion that Apollo rescued him with his own devices (1565) when his plan was exposed and Creusa planned Ion's murder. Apollo has had to use tactics as well as strategy. There is a suggestion that he intervenes at 1197: it was Apollo's doves (the birds which fly around Delphi) which revealed the poisoned cup which would otherwise have killed Ion.⁶ The Pythia appears at the precise moment of Ion's pursuit of Creusa into the temple (1320).

The audience is not allowed certainty, but Apollo's ability to bring about events as he has planned is undermined. This expresses more serious doubts about his effectiveness than in *IT* or *Alcestis*. There is a greater human involvement in how events turn out. We could blame humans for their meddling but even so should Apollo not have anticipated this? Do his mysteriousness and ambiguity not make human interference inevitable? It raises questions rather than answers, but Apollo seems weakened in foresight and authority.

⁶ See Burnett (1971: 118) and Rosivach (1977: 291-92). Lloyd (1986: 42ff.) comments on the doves and the wine pouring that 'the divine and human explanations should be seen as complementary, neither excluding the other. See further his comments on the other 'interventions.'

Apollo's absence

While these events are taking place, throughout the play, Apollo is absent from the stage. The audience are led to see this as suggestive of ineffectiveness, by how it is presented in the text and by the aspects of their knowledge that it addresses. There are some signs of the god on stage: the Chorus comment on an *Aguieus* column or an altar at 185-88, and an altar may be referred to at 436ff. Apollo is represented by signs on stage in Sophocles' *OT*, but the difference here is that *Ion* is set at Delphi 'where Phoebus sitting at the very navel of the earth, sings to mortals' (6, trans. Lee). Sitting – καθίζων – suggests his physical presence but he is not here, and we only hear of his words through Hermes and Xuthus. The audience would of course not expect Apollo to be present at the *actual* Delphi; and the Delphi of this play does have a contemporary aspect (see further below). However, Hermes and Athena *are* present and this is, at the same time, mythic Delphi – where Apollo lives for most of the year. The audience would also be quite likely to compare this with *Eumenides* where Apollo is present in scenes representing Delphi and where he carries out purification within his own temple. His absence, therefore, would be meaningful to the audience. Apollo is not at Delphi where he should be. In *Ion*, then, we see a stronger version of the problematisation of Apollo's traditional absence, and thus a more profound questioning of his authority and effectiveness.

Apollo and morality

As noted in the previous chapter, Euripides presents a more overt challenge to the morality of gods generally, and Apollo, in his oracular function, is often the focus for this. Euripides, however, does not allow final moral judgement of the god. First, there is the question of whether he has lied to Xuthus, but the seriousness of this is undermined by

Xuthus' somewhat comic persona. Second, the audience would be suspicious of any information from the trickster-god, Hermes, and the play addresses spectators' knowledge of the relative status of Apollo and Hermes in other literature, myths and cult. (The moral question of the rape is dealt with below in the section on the characters' viewpoints.)

Xuthus reports that Apollo has said that the first person he meets on leaving the temple will be his son (530-31). The meaning of this has been debated.⁷ If it is seen as a lie, it raises the moral question of whether a lie is justifiable if its purpose is for the good. Athena says (1602) that the secret must be kept so that Xuthus may happily retain his delusion. It is better that Xuthus does not know so that Apollo's plan of installing Ion at Athens can be brought about. However, there is also the question of whether Apollo actually said it; indeed, the audience do not know. We only have Xuthus' word for it (530ff.), and the doubt is stressed by Ion's comment that μαρτυρεῖς σάυτῳ (532). Xuthus explains that he has heard correctly (532) and Ion continues to challenge him (533). This is part of a comic exchange and, to some extent, 'in character' for both a duped Xuthus and an intelligent Ion, but it also raises the serious question of whether we can believe Xuthus or accept that he knows what he heard. His use of the epithet *Loxias* – 'oblique' (531) – reminds us of Apollo's ambiguity (Hermes uses it at 36 when reporting Apollo's instructions) and may suggest that he has misinterpreted.⁸ Xuthus is made a comic figure

⁷ See Owen (1939: xx), Burnett (1962: 92), Hartigan (1991: 69, 87), Meltzer (2006: 147, n. 3), Zacharia (2003: 132), Stehle (2009: 254-5).

⁸ As noted by Zacharia (2003: 131). Lee notes (1997 ad loc., citing Burnett, 1970) that '*Loxias*' is used 23 times in this play (26 in all other tragedies).

overall by being finally left in ignorance of events, and he may be an unreliable intermediary for Apollo's words.

The same applies to Hermes. He says that Apollo said Ion was his own son (35), but we could ask whether the audience would see as reliable any information he provides.

Scholars have noted here Hermes' status as a trickster god.⁹ It depends from where the audience is taking their model. Hermes is carrying out his traditional role as mediator here and may have been expected to be reliable as such. However, his authority may be undermined by the likelihood that he was seen as a god of a lower status than Apollo, although this is not suggested in the text. Spectators would also have been familiar with Hermes as a mischief-maker. In the *Iliad* (24.445) he puts the enemy camp to sleep. The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* presents a mischievous young god ('prince of thieves', 292) who is berated by Apollo for stealing his elder brother's cattle. He may have been seen to convey Apollo's information unreliably or, alternatively, to be the ideal god to convey an actual lie by his elder brother. Furthermore, when, at 1534-36 Creusa explains Apollo's 'lie' to Ion, noting that he did not actually say he was born to Xuthus only that he was a gift to him, the fact that she could not actually know what Apollo said only seems to cloud the issue further.

The spectator does seem meant to accept at plot level that Ion is Apollo's son, and that he intends to install him at Athens. As Willetts comments, 'The whole design of the play depends on the assumption that Apollo seduced Creusa',¹⁰ in which case his oracle to

⁹ Loraux (1990: 178), Meltzer (2006: 158, n. 26), Zacharia (2003: 108-9), Goward (1999: 1-26).

¹⁰ Willetts (1958: 180).

Xuthus is at least deliberately misleading, if for the ‘good’, but the audience are not allowed total certainty. At the end Ion is not sure and says he will go into the temple to ask Phoebus if he is the son of the god or of a mortal father (1547-48). At 1606 he accepts Athena’s explanation and defence of Apollo but the question is not directly answered.

Apollo’s apparent lie, or at least deliberate ambiguity, resonates with his own tragic association with ephebic trickery, as seen in the *Oresteia* where this characteristic of the god represents a limitation of his moral and intellectual character in comparison with the wise Athena. It is also echoed in *Alcestis* (Chapter 6, pp. 196-97) to different purpose. Here the raising of the question of an actual lie represents a stronger moral challenge. However, both the fact of the lie and its morality remain uncertain, suggesting the impenetrability of the oracle to human perception. Apollo’s words and intentions are mediated by unreliable characters while he is absent from his own sanctuary. Furthermore, Delphi is not only the seat of Apollo, it is the centre of the world and the gateway for communication with the gods. Euripides raises this kind of possibility:¹¹ if the word from the oracle is uncertain, humans have no access to any gods nor any stable notion of truth.

The characters’ viewpoints

The varied and changing views of Apollo in *Ion*, in juxtaposition with the movements of the plot are, as in *IT*, the main dynamic by which he is presented. Again it will be important to take into account the nature of the characters who express these views and the dramatic context of their comments.

¹¹ Compare *OT*, 906-10, discussed in Chapter 5.

In Ion's 'intellectual' questioning of the god we see a vividly and subtly presented character, but one also used by Euripides in engagement with some aspects of contemporary thought. Ion's views develop as he learns about Apollo. His opening monody (82-183) presents his idealised view of the god and Delphi. This is Ion's home (109-11) and he works for Apollo, his substitute parent. He addresses him by 'positive' epithets, Healer and Phoebus:

ὦ Παιᾶν ὦ Παιᾶν (125=141)

Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ·
τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ,
τοῦ δ' ὠφέλιμον ἔμοι πατέρος ὄνομα λέγω
Φοῖβον τὸν κατὰ ναόν. (136-40)

In this hymn Ion's Apollo is the god of light and a healer;¹² he is not at this point *Loxias* – the oblique – the name for oracular Apollo used by his two unreliable intermediaries, Hermes and Xuthus, as seen above.¹³

Ion's perception of Apollo is of a god who feeds or nurtures him (137, 183) – an expression of his innocence *and* ignorance at this point. He is Apollo's δοῦλος (309), not perhaps as pejorative in meaning as 'slave', and he sees his work as an honour, although of course he does not know the reasons behind his circumstances.

¹² Furley (1999-2000: 188ff.) discusses lines 82-183 as a 'hymn'. Swift (2010: 91ff.) discusses its paianic imagery and use of ritual language.

¹³ Lee (1997, on 83) notes that Ion uses 'Phoebus' 12 times in this opening passage. See also 'swan' (162) and 'lyre' (164) – benign attributes of Apollo that are mentioned rarely in tragedy.

When he sees Creusa, his remarks on her tears suggest that he is emotionally sensitive (245-46) but also point up his ignorance at this point of human suffering caused by Apollo. When he asks Creusa why she has come and he learns of another side to the god his attitude changes suddenly:

Creusa: Φοίβωι μιγῆναί φησί τις φίλων ἐμῶν.
Ion: Φοίβωι γυνὴ γεγῶσα; μὴ λέγ', ὦ ξένη. (338-39)

Ion, in terms of mythic values, is naïve. The audience would recognise this as behaviour typical of gods – including Apollo – in their relations with mortal women. Ion seeks to provide rational alternatives:

οὐκ ἔστιν· ἀνδρὸς ἀδικίαν αἰσχύνεται. (341)

Creusa says the woman has been wretched and he asks 'By what action, seeing that she was coupled with a god?' (343, trans. Lee), which is comic in its juxtaposition of mythic values – that such divine attention is an honour – and human psychology. However, when Creusa tells him about the child, he replies:

ἀδικεῖ νυν ὁ θεός, ἢ τεκοῦσα δ' ἀθλία. (355)

This, more seriously, applies human morality incisively to Apollo's behaviour and its results – his coupling with a mortal woman, his responsibility for the death of her child and for her suffering.

When Ion asks the question of whether Apollo may have taken the child and reared him in secret (357), he reveals his naiveté and his need to believe in Apollo, but ironically hits on the truth and raises another serious question of whether Apollo's plan to rescue the child makes his treatment of Creusa any more morally acceptable.

Creusa wants to ask Apollo about the child (346), but Ion explains that the god cannot be forced or questioned (369-80). This is Apollo, the god who one *should* be able to ask. If you cannot ask Apollo, you cannot ask any god. The play presents this inability to know gods as the central human dilemma (and as we will see at the end, 1546, Ion will be prevented by Athena from asking Apollo a direct question).

At 429-51 Ion's youthful urge to learn is a feature of his convincing characterisation, but he also seems to voice elements of the intellectual curiosity and scepticism of contemporary Athens. Ion questions Apollo, applying human morality and logical argument to his behaviour and to that of other gods, Poseidon and Zeus (446). We do not see the emotion-driven opinions of an Orestes 'abandoned' by Apollo in *IT*. Ion's moral attack is modified by the remarks in parentheses at 444. This, and his accusation of the gods' imprudence – προμηθίας (448) – rather than justice, effectively expresses his personality and status in relation to Apollo; he is reluctant to criticise the gods, and he may be afraid of Apollo.¹⁴ At the same time this highlights the sense that Euripides is raising a possibility rather than making a judgement.

Ion's changing opinions and experiences of Apollo are seen in the contrast between the content of this and his earlier song (82ff.). This is highlighted by the similarity in the opening lines where Ion carries out his duties, but shifts abruptly from lyric praise to direct criticism (436-37).

¹⁴ See Lee (1997, on 444, 448).

We see here a shift in dramatic techniques from the other two lighter plays. In *IT* in particular we saw a contrast between choral odes of praise of Apollo and criticisms expressed by characters; but here Ion sings or speaks both passages, pointing up the change and progression in his views on Apollo. This change has been seen as too quick, an unconvincing character development, and as either an expression of Euripides' views or as use of Ion as a mouthpiece for engaging with contemporary ideas.¹⁵ There is a further example at 671-72: '...may it turn out that that my mother is of Athenian stock so that I can enjoy freedom of speech inherited from my mother.' (trans. Lee) in Ion's apparent (anachronistic) insight into issues of Athenian citizenship.¹⁶ Hartigan explains this insight, not entirely convincingly, by saying that Ion has learned about life elsewhere from the many visitors coming to Delphi.¹⁷ In these examples we do see the expression of issues of contemporary concern, and in contemporary rhetorical style.¹⁸ These are obviously ideas with which the playwright is concerned: they are voiced through the central character who, if naïve, is sympathetic, intelligent and reasonable (we will see the contrasting ravings of a 'mad' Orestes in *Orestes*). However, as seen in Ion's shifting attitudes above, his characterisation is subtle and convincing. This and his logic and reason in fact make his questioning of Apollo more incisive.

¹⁵ On Ion as a 'mouthpiece' see Owen (1939 on 436), Meltzer (2006: 166-7). In contrast see Lee (1997, on 429-51) who finds the various elements of the speech entirely appropriate to the character of Ion.

¹⁶ Pericles' law of 451 required for citizenship, both the mother and father to be citizens.

¹⁷ Hartigan (1991: 71).

¹⁸ See Goldhill (1986: 222ff.) on the influence of contemporary rhetoric on speeches.

It is in Creusa's experiences that we see an 'emotional' victim of Apollo. We will see here how she can to some extent be seen as a voice for women generally, and how Apollo's Delphi is problematised as a masculine institution. We hear from Creusa's point of view of her rape by a god, which is unusual in Greek literature,¹⁹ as are her expressions of suffering and shame as a result of this experience (247-51).²⁰ At 356 we see that she has not had another child. In her first overt address to the god who raped her, she berates Apollo for his treatment:

ὦ Φοῖβε, κάκει κανθάδ' οὐ δίκαιος εἶ
 ἐς τὴν ἀποῦσαν, ἧς πάρεισιν οἱ λόγοι·
 ὅς γ' οὔτ' ἔσωσας τὸν σὸν δν σῶσαί σ' ἐχρῆν
 οὔθ' ἱστορούσῃ μητρὶ μάντις ὦν ἐρεῖς. (384-87)

We know that in fact Apollo *has* saved the child, but this does not negate the considerable weight of sympathy evoked in the audience for Creusa's suffering. This finds its most potent expression in her monody (859ff.), in another example of how choral odes/monodies about Apollo are more complex and their use more ambivalent in this play than in *Alcestis* and *IT*.²¹ Here it is not a Chorus but a highly emotional and personally involved character who is singing the ode to Apollo. The Chorus have told Creusa that she will not have children (760-62), that Xuthus has been given a son by Apollo (774-75), and

¹⁹ Io at *PV*. 640ff., is a rare example.

²⁰ Rape by a god was traditionally a source of honour for a mortal woman. See, for example, Apollo and Evadne in Pind. *Ol.* 6. 29ff. See Dunn (1990: 132) on how the telling of Creusa's story of rape as an act of violence, and Creusa as a victim, goes against usual practice in Greek tragedy where rape of a woman by man or god is usually described with a euphemism as *harpagē* or *agōgē*. Dunn notes how Creusa's story challenges the audience both to acknowledge the violence of rape and to feel for the victim.

²¹ On Creusa's monody see Burnett (1962: 95-96), Larue (1963), Zacharia (2003: 78ff.) and Swift (2008: 44-46; 2010: 94ff.).

she has been persuaded by the Old Man (808ff.) that she should kill her husband and Ion (844-45). The ode is a complex expression of her emotions and consequent view of Apollo, combining lyric praise and condemnation. This monody uses formal aspects of the hymn, as seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and in the *Iliad* (1.37-42),²² in its praise of the god and its reference to places and attributes associated with him (881-84, 905-6). Here the hymn form is subverted by the tragic focus on the power of Creusa's experience.²³ The contrast between hymnic and tragic views of gods is made overt.

Apollo has raped her and her son is lost 'snatched away by birds as a feast' (903). She cites Apollo's benign activities as an ironic accusation of his indifference and cowardice:

τλᾶμον, σὺ δὲ <καὶ> κιθάραι κλάζεις
 παιᾶνας μέλπων. (905-6)

Also, as Lee notes, she has been prevented by shame from speaking (336, 860) while Apollo has no shame.²⁴ The monody is an ironic reflection of Ion's initial praises of Apollo which were made in the context of his limited knowledge of the god and lack of awareness of his own situation. Creusa's song presents a very different experience and a side of Apollo which is unknown to Ion.²⁵

²² The latter as noted by Swift (2008: 108).

²³ On the subversion of hymnic aspects here see Wolff (1969: 180), Furley (1999-2000: 188ff.), Loraux (1990: 174-5), Lee (1997, on 859-922). See Rutherford (1995: 129ff.) on *paians* in *Ion*

²⁴ Lee (1997, on 895).

²⁵ Swift (2010: 94) notes that it echoes Ion's song structurally and recalls the piety of the earlier song in order to challenge its beliefs.

However, some aspects of Creusa's accusation are clearly untrue. The main criticism is that the child is lost (916-17) and we know that he is not. Again, the contrast between human knowledge and the plot reveals that it is partly humans' lack of understanding of Apollo that causes suffering. But sympathy is still evoked for Creusa. She is emotionally justified in her anger against the god, and her emotions, previously restrained (256-57), have been inflamed by the Old Man.

As well as expressing her own suffering, there is the suggestion that she speaks for women generally:

ὦ τλήμονες γυναῖκες· ὦ τολμήματα
θεῶν. τί δῆτα; ποῖ δίκην ἀνοίσομεν,
εἰ τῶν κρατούντων ἀδικίαις ὀλούμεθα; (252-54)

We should note, however, that at 398-400 she dissociates herself from the 'evil' ones and is not a voice for all women. Neither are the Chorus; they also make gender-based comments, attacking unjust male poets who present women as immoral (1090-1105). The authority of the Chorus, however, is undermined in this play by their highly partial nature – they are very much Creusa's women.²⁶ Their comment when Xuthus has been granted Ion as a son that 'The pronouncements do not mollify my fear that they conceal some trickery' (δόλος) (685, trans. Lee) may express Athenian fears about human intervention in the transmission of oracles but it also shows their loyalty to Creusa; and they intend Ion's death (720).

²⁶ See Hartigan (1991: 78, 82) on the pro-Athenian nature of the Chorus.

There is certainly not an unequivocally sympathetic feminine voice here; and, on the question of Euripides' tragic treatment of women in this play, neither are feminist approaches in agreement.²⁷

There is a theme in the play of 'bad' mythical women, for example the Amazons (1144) and the Gorgons' blood which Creusa will use as poison (1003, 1265). Creusa herself is strongly linked with the chthonic in this play (discussed below). Also, she *does* intend murder. However, it is the Old Man who, telling her to act like a woman (843), suggests the killing of Xuthus and Ion (976, 978). As Swift also points out in Creusa's defence,²⁸ she does not know that Ion is her son when she plots to kill him, and she is protecting her *oikos*. The sympathy with women's experience is strongly expressed, as it is elsewhere in Euripides (Medea, Phaedra), although it should probably be seen as sympathy with their suffering rather than as politically radical suggestion of their oppressed position in society.²⁹

²⁷ Rabinowitz (1993: 192, 220) sees women being demonised in *Ion* (Creusa), men exonerated and sympathetic and that the play is really a father and son reunion. See Michelini's effective criticism of this (1997, esp. 209 and 216ff.) for its 'unhistorical' feminist approach. Some scholars find the play to be more 'pro-women': Saxonhouse (1986: 271-72), Swift (2008: 58ff.), Stehle (2009: 259). Dunn (1990: 130) sees the conflict between male and female as one of the centres of 'meaning' in the play.

²⁸ Swift (2008: 63).

²⁹ See Harrison (1968: 30-36), Swift (2008: 95) and Dunn (1990: 133) who notes that rape was a crime but that it was not considered a crime against the woman.

There are also different views on how Apollo's role is treated within this gender theme. *Ion* has been seen to be critical of both Apollo as a male and of Delphi as a male institution.³⁰ However, this could be challenged (see Rabinowitz, n. 27), and I have shown how the Pythia has some importance in the play, albeit as the representative of Apollo.

Tragic Apollo is traditionally a powerful male in conflict with females both mortal and divine (as in the *Oresteia*). Here the play will assert the male line, that of Apollo, over Athens and the Ionic races, in this sense upholding masculine ideology. However, it is possible that Euripides problematises autochthony (discussed below), by which Athenians are born directly from their land, by the sympathetic presentation of motherhood here. The effect of the combination of the intellectual and the emotional in the experiences of Ion and Creusa is broad and powerful. We will see within the next section how their views of Apollo change at the end of the play and at what level this is convincing.

The ending

Euripides again deploys Athena at the ending of a play, here marginalising Apollo and suggesting his ineffectiveness. The use of Apollo here also expresses a sense of increased separation between divine activity and human experience of it. The 'acceptance' in Ion and Creusa's views of the god is convincing in personal terms, and they can be happy; indeed this ending is emotionally moving. However, Apollo does not make a stage appearance even at his own sanctuary, and Athena's explanation provides highly qualified resolution. We can compare *Eumenides* where Athena supports Apollo but then moves beyond him,

³⁰ See Gamel (2001: 159) and Meltzer (2006: 153).

replacing him as the representative of Zeus. Here Athena defends an Apollo who has been discredited far enough to undermine *her* judgement. Apollo represents the major questions which are left unanswered and the continuing mystery and inaccessibility of the divine.

We see some changes in the views of Apollo expressed by both Ion and Creusa. Ion does not condemn Apollo even when no longer in total ignorance of events and his own situation. When Creusa reveals his parentage, he is happy to be Apollo's son (1488) and says:

καὶ τὸ γένος οὐδὲν μεμπτόν, ὥς ἡμῖν, τόδε. (1519)

This is rather understated.³¹ Ion does still doubt the truth of his ancestry (1523-27) and asks the central question of the play:

ὁ θεὸς ἀληθῆς ἢ μάτην μαντεύεται;
ἐμοῦ ταρασσεί, μήτερ, εἰκότως φρένα. (1537-38)

and when Creusa responds (1539-45), answering his question only indirectly, he does not accept her explanation:

οὐχ ᾧδε φαύλως αὐτ' ἐγὼ μετέρχομαι,
ἀλλ' ἱστορήσω Φοῖβον εἰσελθὼν δόμους
εἴτ' εἰμὶ θνητοῦ πατρὸς εἴτε Λοξίου. (1546-48)

This is a question he is not allowed to ask as Athena enters. However, Ion seems finally to accept Athena's explanation of Apollo's plan and her justification of him:

ὦ Διὸς Παλλὰς μεγίστου θύγατερ, οὐκ ἀπιστίαι
σοὺς λόγους ἐδεξάμεσθα, πείθομαι δ' εἶναι πατρὸς
Λοξίου καὶ τῆσδε· καὶ πρὶν τοῦτο δ' οὐκ ἀπιστον ἦν.³² (1606-8)

³¹ Lee (1997 ad loc.).

³² Lee (1997 ad loc.) notes that 'not something beyond belief' has been seen as an inadequate expression of Ion's earlier scepticism. Owen (1939) amends to καὶ πρὶν τοῦτο γ' οὐκ εὐπιστον (οὐχὶ πιστόν) ἦν. –

Creusa also accepts that Apollo's plan was for the good (1539-45). She now praises Apollo (1610) who has restored her son to her and finds the doors of the oracle are now a welcome sight (1611-12).

This has been seen as a happy conclusion: Swift comments that 'we are wrong to problematise *Ion*'s happy ending' and that, while 'Apollo's behaviour may be open to criticism, the play's upbeat ending encourages us to accept it, as Creusa does.'³³ I find rather that we have to consider the emotional reasons for Creusa's and Ion's acceptance. On a purely personal level it is a happy ending, but this is undercut. Creusa's acceptance is emotion-driven; she can be happy as she now has her son. Ion also accepts the outcome but his questions remain unanswered. Ion has learned much but his characterisation reveals that the application of 'knowledge' to the gods is pointless. Xuthus cannot be said to accept or not because he is left in ignorance of the facts, an unsettling aspect to any 'happy' ending.

Beyond the level of personal emotions Apollo represents the questions which remain. There are the moral questions of a god raping a human and of whether he lied. There is also the question of whether he planned the outcome and, if he did, whether this makes his actions morally acceptable. We receive no answers because Apollo is absent and his actions must, again, be explained and justified by Athena.

'even if before this was not believable'. As Lee notes, while Ion wanted more direct assurance, he did not find Creusa's account of his paternity incredible; if he had his attempt to question Apollo would have been nonsensical.

³³ See Swift (2008: 50, 100), and also Lloyd (1986: 45) on this as a happy ending.

The goddess's appearance in Apollo's place has been seen to make him seem cowardly,³⁴ while her comments in support of him (1556ff.) have been seen as unconvincing. To some extent it is appropriate that Athena carries out these functions at the end. As in *Eumenides*, where she is the Athenian civic goddess, and in *IT*, where she installs an Athenian cult, here she installs Ion as king of Athens.³⁵ As Papadopoulou comments, 'Athena is strongly presented as patron goddess of Athens'.³⁶ She provides some sense of closure and does not necessarily cast Apollo in a bad light. Apollo's lower status would to some extent be taken for granted.

A more direct undermining of Apollo is seen in Athena's explanation of his absence; this has raised much comment on what it suggests about him:

ὅς ἐς μὲν ὄψιν σφῶιν μολεῖν οὐκ ἤξιον,
μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόληι. (1557-58)

There is the question of whether this comment expresses Apollo's shame. Commentators have had different views.³⁷ It may be, as Lee notes, that it is not that Apollo is ashamed nor that he wants to save Ion and Creusa from blasphemy (see Burnett, n. 37), but that he actually 'distances himself from a dispute conducted in the terms of mortals' limited

³⁴ Graf (2007: 67) refers to the 'cowardly Apollo of *Ion*' as an example of a trace of irreverence in Euripides.

³⁵ Lloyd (1986: 45) adds to this that she is also 'the patron goddess of the autochthonous Athenians. She collaborated in the birth of Erichthonius from the earth and arranged for him to be brought up safely.' (267-72, cf. 21-24).

³⁶ Papadopoulou (2001: 303).

³⁷ See Graf n. 34 above. Willetts (1958: 182) comments that after Athena's explanation 'Apollo now becomes contemptible.' Burnett (1962: 57) on the other hand finds that Apollo wants to save Ion and Creusa from blasphemy.

perspective'.³⁸ However, I would note that through Creusa the question of Apollo's shame *has* been brought up. This play raises the possibility of applying human morality to gods and the audience may do so here.

Athena offers, in her judgement of Apollo, a resolution that is to some extent part of the problem:

καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε· (1595)

ἦινεσ' οὔνεκ' εὐλογεῖς θεὸν μεταβαλοῦς' αἰεὶ που
χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ' οὐκ ἀσθενῇ.
(1614-15)

Too many questions have been raised about Apollo's morality and effectiveness for us to accept entirely her support of the god. Even though the human characters accept the outcome, doubts would remain for the audience. Athena's authority may also be undermined, at least for some spectators, by her speech (1553ff.) which has been called jingoistic.³⁹ Apollo's absence and the suggestions about it would be noted by the audience but there is no final authoritative judgement on him.

The play does, therefore, have a (qualified) happy ending and, indeed, this is one of the aspects which makes it a lighter play, but there is clearly more to it than this. Swift comments that Athena's prevention of the asking of questions is used to highlight the absurdity of supposing that gods can be held to mortal standards.⁴⁰ However, as Euripides

³⁸ Lee (1997 ad loc. citing Strohm, 1957: 162, n. 3).

³⁹ Meltzer (2006: 181). He adds that her speech glosses over 'inconvenient realities' about conflicts between Athens and her Ionian cities. Rabinowitz (1993: 204) calls it a 'colonizing master narrative.'

⁴⁰ Swift (2008: 97).

can be seen to engage with elements of scepticism in Athenian society, mortal standards are asserted more strongly in this play and the effect may be discomforting rather than absurd.

Chthonic Delphi and the Acropolis caves

The particular treatments in *Ion* of the chthonic aspect of Delphi and of the Acropolis caves can be seen as elements of the beneficial side of Apollo more evident in the lighter plays. Apollo's nature here, unlike in Aeschylus, is in contrast to, and in conflict with, the chthonic side of Delphi. The Acropolis caves are the site of a new, central role for the god at Athens. The caves in *Ion* can also be usefully discussed in relation to changes in the Athenian cultural and socio-political contexts. There seems to have been an increased interest in Apollo generally in late fifth-century Athens. In Chapter 1, we saw inscriptional evidence of greater authority for Delphic Apollo at Athens and, in vase images, we saw evidence of greater cult interest in the god. The vase images, Shapiro finds, attest to a particular Athenian concern with Apollo as ancestor of the Ionian Greeks that became especially relevant during the Peloponnesian War.⁴¹ Shapiro adds that the iconographical evidence complements that of Athenian building activity and dedications on Delos and Delphi and sanctuaries at Athens. Euripidean tragedy also shows this increased interest in Apollo and reflects the same dynamic, that of appropriation of the god on behalf of

⁴¹ Shapiro (1993, esp. 101).

Athens.⁴² *Ion*, however, within its themes of Ionianism and autochthony,⁴³ reveals tensions and any assertion of Apollo as a positive force is highly qualified.

Chthonic Delphi

As in the *Oresteia*, the Delphi of *Ion* has a chthonic element, but here it is used to very different effect than in Aeschylus. The Delphic temple is presented in a fifth-century setting (the temple itself was only built in the second half of the sixth century). There is limited evidence for everyday procedure at Delphi, although we do have some;⁴⁴ indeed, this play is itself seen as a major piece of evidence. However, Delphic cult is described

⁴² Although there is little direct relationship between tragedy and vases in the 5th century, an aspect which, as Taplin (2007: 29) comments, cannot be fully explained.

⁴³ Ionianism, the idea that Athens was the 'oldest land of Ionia', is found in Solon (fr. 4a *IEG*²). See Shapiro (1989: 49), Hedrick (1988: 204). See also on Ionianism, Parker's chapter on religion and empire (1996) and Constantakopoulou (2007). Autochthony, as noted above (p. 239), is the idea that Athenians were born directly from their land. It is an important aspect of Athenians' positive self-perception and has been seen as related specifically to democracy (Rosivach, 1987). Shapiro (1998: 132) finds evidence for its being older than the 5th century. The references to it in the catalogue of ships in the *Il.* 2.547 and in the *Od.* 7.81 suggest that it had a mythical history before the 5th century. I note also that the idea is not exclusive to Athens; it is found in the myth of Cadmus and the foundation of Thebes by men grown from sown dragon's teeth. For views on Apollo, Ionianism and autochthony in *Ion* see Loraux (1993: 179), Zacharia (2003: 44ff.), Swift (2008: 73ff.).

⁴⁴ Our main ancient source is Plutarch who was a priest at Delphi for a period. On Apollo in Plutarch see Nikolaidis (2009: 569ff.). Herodotus, despite his interest in oracles, has little on Delphic procedure. See Price (1985: 128ff.), Bowden (2005: 12ff.) including his references to previous scholarship, and Graf (2009: 57 ff.). See Griffith (2009: 475) on the complex relationship between 5th-century Delphic practice and mantic interpretation in plays.

here in a way which suggests reference to actual practice. There is the cleansing before the ritual (94-97), and the requirement to slaughter a sheep before entering the inner shrine (226-29). There is also a reference to nobles being chosen by lot (414-16); this describes a ritual for which we have historical evidence that suggests it was an actual practice.⁴⁵ In Ion's question to Creusa about why she has come to consult the oracle – 'Is it about the produce of the soil or about children that you have come?' (303, trans. Lee) – we see typical issues about which questions were asked at Delphi.⁴⁶

This Delphi is bright and idyllic; the place and its rituals are, of course, as seen through Ion's eyes. It is in stark contrast to the dark and mysterious Delphi of *Choephoroi*. In the Delphic setting of this play the chthonic element is, in fact, found in descriptions of the carvings on the temple; these are seen through the eyes of Creusa's maids who seem to be presented almost as Athenian tourists (184-231).⁴⁷ The suggestive power of the chthonic element is thus distanced. The dark mythical side of Delphi is not the living feature it was in *Choephoroi* where it was part of the dramatic 'present' of the play, and of the characterisation of Apollo. However, this chthonic element still has an important thematic function. The events depicted in the carvings suggest an Apollo in opposition to chthonic elements and suppress any association of the god with them.

⁴⁵ See Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 292d. See also Amandry (1953: 118ff.) and Roux (1976: 56ff.). On the 'spokesmen' here, also referred to at 369, see Lee (1997, on 369 and 415-16).

⁴⁶ Bowden (2005: 108ff.).

⁴⁷ For how the carvings might be represented on stage see Hartigan (1991: 72), Mastronarde (1975: 173, n. 22).

Apollo here represents Olympian order against chthonic disorder. At 190-218 we see the Olympians and their heroic offspring defeating chthonic creatures. Heracles defeats the Hydra (190-99), Bellerophon slays the Chimaera (200-4) (both of the family of the chthonic Typhon and snake-monster Echidna, Hesiod, *Theogony* 309ff.). At 206ff. we see the battle of the giants ('Earth's children', 218); Athena defeats Enceladus (209-11) and Bacchus kills another giant (216-18).⁴⁸

Apollo can also be seen to represent divine order in opposition to the chthonic disorder which is part of the human world here. Creusa has autochthonous parentage. At 267ff. when she meets Ion there is much chthonic imagery associated with her.⁴⁹ At 1004ff. Creusa describes her phial of Gorgon's blood which reminds us of the dark history of her family. There is also chthonic imagery in descriptions of the hangings in the tent where she plans to kill Ion (1160ff.). In Ion's speech, as he enters the temple to which Creusa has escaped, she is described as a serpent, and there is a further reference to Gorgons and serpents (1261-74). The imagery of the snakes (21-26) placed by Athena to protect the infant Erichthonius, founder of the Athenian royal dynasty, is presented in a way similar to the birth of Ion whose basket has snakes in its design,⁵⁰ and we also see, at 1421, the Gorgon design in the weaving of the cloth. Rosivach sees the mythical scenes as representing 'the play's central event, the triumph of Apollo over the opposition of Kreusa'.⁵¹ However, we should remember that Apollo's 'triumph' is qualified by his own

⁴⁸ See further in Rosivach (1977: 284ff.).

⁴⁹ Rosivach (1977: 288) discusses chthonic, especially snake, imagery and Creusa.

⁵⁰ Mastronarde (1975: 164): snakes are 'symbols of the dynasty's chthonic origins'.

⁵¹ Rosivach (1977: 285).

moral and effectual limitations and by Creusa's highly sympathetic presentation. I find that Mastronarde goes rather too far in his idea that human disorder disrupts the 'innocent serenity fostered by Apollo at Delphi and the god's scheme for the smooth and untroubled recognition of mother and son'.⁵² It is not just human disorder which has disrupted proceedings but Apollo's own failings.

Apollo here also represents the upper world in contrast to the more chthonic Dionysus. In this marked contrast, seen here for the first time in extant tragedy,⁵³ we see something of how the relationship of the two gods will evolve in future perceptions. At lines 552, 714ff. and 1126 Dionysus is associated with wild behaviour and with the craggy upper reaches of Delphi. It is possible that the feast where Creusa plans to kill Ion would be seen as Dionysiac, and she does intend to poison him using wine (1184-85).⁵⁴ Dionysus is traditionally more chthonic than Apollo,⁵⁵ and he is darker in that he presides over winter at Delphi, Apollo over summer;⁵⁶ here we see this reflected in tragedy. Euripides' Apollo here represents Olympian order in an early example of an aspect which will become part of his characteristic opposition with Dionysus.

The Acropolis caves

This play's use of the Acropolis caves suggests a more 'positive' role for Apollo and a new

⁵² Mastronarde (1975: 165).

⁵³ Bierl (1994: 83) and Zacharia (2003: 110ff.) both comment on the importance of this pairing in *Ion*.

⁵⁴ Noted by Zacharia (2003: 110, 117).

⁵⁵ See Burkert (1985: 224).

⁵⁶ Plut. *Mor.* 389c.

relationship between tragic Apollo and the Athenian cult and socio-political contexts, and this will be discussed in detail. Less space will be given to Ionianism and autochthony as these are not my main focus and are well discussed elsewhere.

In Chapter 3 we saw how, in *Choephoroi*, references to the Delphic oracle as a cave served to link Apollo with the mythic chthonic past and the underworld Furies. It was also noted that the likely reference to the caves in *Agamemnon* which, being under the Acropolis and linked with distant Delphi through the *Pythais* which set off from there, were part of his peripheral cult positioning and marginal status. In both plays the caves are a distancing element.

The same caves are seen explicitly in *Ion*. The *χθονὸς / Μακράς* – ‘the Long rocks’ (12-13) – are the place on the Acropolis where Apollo rapes Creusa.⁵⁷ We know these are the Acropolis caves from the accurate topographical descriptions:

<i>Ion:</i>	Μακράι δὲ χῶρός ἐστ’ ἐκεῖ κεκλημένος;
<i>Creusa:</i>	τί δ’ ἱστορεῖς τόδ’; ὥς μ’ ἀνέμνησάς τινος.
<i>Ion:</i>	τιμᾶι σφε Πύθιος ἀστραπαὶ τε Πύθιαι. (283-85) ⁵⁸

This is seen more specifically in these lines:

<i>Creusa:</i>	ἄκουε τοῖνυν· οἶσθα Κεκροπίων πετρῶν
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⁵⁷ Lee notes (1997 ad loc.) that the word *Μακράι* is used by Euripides several times (283, 494, 937, 1400) in a way which suggests that it was common, but in fact it is not used by any other writer.

⁵⁸ Lee notes (1997, on 285) that Ion’s identification of the place of lightning as the caves here contradicts Strabo 9.2.11 who says it was at the altar of *Zeus Astrapaïos* between the temples of Apollo and Olympian Zeus. However, see Chapter 1, n. 77 on how in Strabo the altar of *Zeus Astrapaïos* seems to refer to the caves, not temples, of Apollo and Olympian Zeus.

πρόσβορον ἄντρον, ἃς Μακρὰς κικλήσκομεν;
Old Man: οἶδ', ἐνθα Πανὸς ἄδυντα καὶ βωμοὶ πέλας. (936-38)

There are further references by Creusa to the caves and the birds which haunt them (501-2, 902-4, 917, 949, 1400, 1494-96). That the caves are the site of the fathering and birth of Ion is clearly emphasised:

ὦ Πανὸς θακήματα καὶ
παραυλίζουσα πέτρα
μυχώδεσι Μακραῖς,
ἵνα χοροὺς στείβουσι ποδοῖν
Ἄγλαύρου κόραι τρίγονοι
στάδια χλοερὰ πρὸ Παλλάδος
ναῶν συρίγγων
ὑπ' αἰόλας ἰαχᾶς
ὕμνων ὅτ' ἀναλίοις
συρίζεις, ὦ Πάν,
τοῖσι σοῖς ἐν ἄντροις,
ἵνα τεκοῦσά τις
παρθένος μελέα βρέφος
Φοίβωι πτανοῖς ἐξόρισεν
θοῖναν θηρσί τε φοινίαν
δαῖτα, πικρῶν γάμων ὕβριν.
οὔτ' ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγων φάτιν
ἄιον εὐτυχίας μετέχειν θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς. (492-508)

(see also 949). However, Hermes says that Creusa bore Ion at home (16-17), so one of them is mistaken, and it may be that she took him there afterwards.

Ion draws on some of the same features of the caves as *Agamemnon*, for example, in the birds which fly around them (*Agamemnon* 47ff.; *Ion* 504, 901, 917, 1495). In *Ion*, however, the caves' main dynamic is as a centring rather than as a distancing force. The

caves are the site of the fathering and legitimising of Ion,⁵⁹ and of the bringing ‘on board’ at Athens of the Delphic god, Apollo *Pythios*, who here becomes *Patrōos* (see further below on *Patrōos*), father of Athens and the Ionic races.⁶⁰ The whole play can be seen on one level as an aetiology of how the cave, here in the mythical past described as caves of Cecrops (1400) or Pan (492ff.) or as deserted (1494), becomes at Athens the *Pythios* cave in cult reality. The cave is central, almost the womb of the city,⁶¹ rather than the marginal place it is in *Choephoroi*. The cave may still carry some of the associations of darkness and the other-worldly which were suggested in the earlier play, and there may still be fears expressed about Apollo here. The audience may remember how the cave was presented in the *Oresteia*, and the possible suggestions of caves generally were noted in Chapter 3. Loraux stresses the dark sinister side of the cave and of autochthony itself.⁶² I find, though, that the cave is made very much part of the city here. This does not preclude its other-worldly suggestions but the overwhelming dynamic is one of centring Apollo and of bringing Athens and Delphi close.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ion is father of the Ionic races in Hdt. 7.94; 8.44. He is mentioned in Hes. fr. 7 (MW). Swift (2008: 16ff.) comments on Ion as a relatively obscure myth in the Greek tradition but there is a version by Sophocles, fr. 319-22 (*TrGF*) where Apollo is also father of Ion but we do not know if this was produced before Euripides’ version. Hartigan (1991: 70) notes that the story appears to be largely Euripides’ own invention. See Owen (1939: xiii – xvii), Conacher (1959: 22-26).

⁶⁰ Sébillote-Cuchet (2006: 168-69): The story of *Ion* ‘permet ce faisant a intégrer le dieu qui tient l’oracle le plus célèbre de Grèce, normalement étranger a Athènes, a l’oikos athénien (Eschyle, *Euménides*, 574).’

⁶¹ See discussion and references in Loraux (1990: 204). Stehle (2009: 260) notes that the Acropolis throughout the play is treated as female space.

⁶² Loraux (1990: 196ff.).

⁶³ Loraux (1990: 168) sees *Ion* as a play about Athens.

Here, as noted above, it is Apollo *Pythios*, god of Delphi, who by fathering Ion becomes *Patrōos*. As discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 46) it seems likely that the *Patrōos* cult was established by Peisistratos,⁶⁴ that it was less important through the fifth century, during which time it was unrepresented in the *agora*,⁶⁵ and that it was re-established in the fourth century. We do not know if Euripides' play was solely responsible for introducing this idea, and there are different views,⁶⁶ but it is the first we know of Apollo *Pythios* becoming *Patrōos*. *Patrōos* became a major role for Apollo in fourth-century Athens,⁶⁷ and this play seems to some extent to be involved in a shift in perceptions of the god at Athens.

Here the fathering of Ion by Apollo in the Acropolis caves relates both god and caves to ideas of Athenian autochthony and Ionianism. These ideas were at the centre of heated contemporary debates on democracy and citizenship,⁶⁸ and on Athenian expansion abroad at a time of strained relations with overseas settlements.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ See Shapiro (1989: 51) on the building of the original *Patrōos* temple in the mid 6th century. See also Hedrick (1988: 206).

⁶⁵ Hedrick (1988: 188): there is no evidence for an Apollo *Patrōos* cult in the *agora* between the destruction of the earlier temple around 480 and the mid 4th century.

⁶⁶ See, Parker (1987: 213, n. 80), Zacharia (2003: 44-45), Sébillote-Cuchet (2006: 168).

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2, n. 41.

⁶⁸ For Apollo and the debate about citizenship (current at the time of the Peloponnesian War) see Tyrrell and Brown (1991: 157) and Loraux (1993: 185).

⁶⁹ Apollo was god of colonisation, probably in relation to his oracular function. See Burkert (1985: 144) that Delphi's rise to fame coincided with the period of colonisation. See Bowden (2005: 119ff.) on Athenian consultations to Delphi regarding colonisation.

There are potential problems in the discussion of ideologies here in that it is not easy to assess how these concepts were perceived by fifth-century Athenians. There has been some debate about the significance of autochthony and Ionianism in the play. Some scholars see an expression of expansionist re-assertion at a time of discontent in the overseas settlements.⁷⁰ It also asserts Athenian superiority over Dorian ‘newcomers’ and thus Sparta.⁷¹ Some do not see the theme as ‘imperial’ at all. Hall suggests rather that the stress on the foundation of Ionia by Athens operates to deny Athens’ Ionian heritage and emphasises her autochthony.⁷² It has also been seen as an aspect of nostalgia for the city’s past, possibly for a time with more moral certainties.⁷³ Recent views in general tend to see the Ionian/autochthony themes as complex, not a simple assertion of Athenian dominance and patriotism, nor of simple anti-Dorianism in that they do in fact also relate the Ionians and Dorians to each other (1590ff.).⁷⁴

Certainly there are tensions within the assertion of Apollo as *Patrōos*. Ionianism may not have been a universally accepted idea. Walsh notes that Thucydides reports widespread disillusionment with such notions of ethnic ties between Ionians and Athens (4.61; 6.85;

⁷⁰ Zacharia (2003: 45). Sébillote-Cuchet (2006: 169) finds that Apollo *Patrōos* has in effect the function of justifying Athenian political imperialism. See Thuc. 3.36ff. – the Mytilenian debate. At 3.36 Thuc. comments on the decision to put to death the entire male adult population and to enslave the women and children that people found it cruel and unprecedented.

⁷¹ See Zacharia (2003: 47).

⁷² Hall (1997: 54-55) cited by Swift, 2008: 114).

⁷³ Wolff (1969: 174), Meltzer (2006: 148, 157). Sébillote-Cuchet (2006: 166) relates the re-establishment of the *Patrōos* cult in the *agora* in the 4th century to the atmosphere of nostalgia.

⁷⁴ See Saxonhouse (1986: 254) and Swift (2008: 78ff.).

7.57).⁷⁵ As noted above, autochthony is in fact undermined by the sympathetic treatment of women and motherhood.⁷⁶ We do not see a straightforward assertion of Athenian superiority with Apollo as new father of the city.

For my argument, as noted, the main point is that Apollo is the object of changed perceptions and is, again, at the centre of contemporary debates. The caves as a motif reveal this clearly, as we see them receiving very different treatment from that in the *Oresteia*. In *Ion* they are the site of the absorption of the distant god into a new and central role in the city. This may suggest tragic response to an atmosphere of less confidence at Athens than at the time of the *Oresteia* when Aeschylus could afford to ‘reject’ Apollo.

Conclusion

In *Ion* there are marked similarities in the use of Apollo, in terms of themes and techniques, to *Alcestis* and *IT*. We have seen again a notable positive side to Apollo – the fulfilment of an oracle which is clearly beneficial to humans, lyric passages of praise of the god and, in addition in *Ion*, the establishment of an important cult role for the god at Athens. This reveals the importance of the type of tragedy, that is, whether light or dark according to my definition of these, in how Apollo is represented.

⁷⁵ Walsh (1966: 310).

⁷⁶ See Zacharia (2003: 147) and Swift (2008: 75). Stehle (2009: 260) finds that Xuthus being left in ignorance aligns the audience’s Athenian identity with women’s knowledge.

In *Ion* we have also seen developments in the presentation of Apollo in comparison, especially, with *IT*. This play was produced at around the same time as *IT* but seems to show an increased engagement with elements of the intellectual context – rational enquiry and scepticism – creating the effect of more obvious tensions between the positive dynamic of the play and the undermining of the god's authority and morality. *Ion* engages with the idea that mortal standards are becoming more important and the questioning of the gods is more searching. It is a play whose uncertainties and contradictions possibly made the fifth-century audience as uncomfortable as it does modern scholars, and Apollo, although not on stage, is at its heart.

Chapter 8: The Homeric god in Euripides

Andromache (425?), *Hecuba* (425?), *Trojan Women* (415).

Apollo does not play a major dramatic role in any of Euripides' Trojan War tragedies but they are important for discussion because, compared with other gods, Apollo has considerable textual presence. Across all three plays he has a higher profile even than Zeus. Within the settings in these plays of the aftermath of the Trojan war we see a Homeric Apollo – the warrior-god of the *Iliad* who is on the Trojan side.¹ This chapter aims partly to illustrate the importance of this Homeric aspect of Apollo, as another example of how in tragedy he is not only an oracular god.

In these three plays Euripides' problematic treatment of Apollo as the warrior-god of epic can be seen as an element of themes which undermine epic values and raise awareness of the atrocities of war. A major element of the discussion will be whether and how we can relate the epic worlds of the plays to contemporary events, whether and how they treat the Peloponnesian War through the Trojan War.² This question of the significance of the historical context can also be applied to Apollo. There is some evidence in historical literature that Athenians perceived Delphi to be favouring Sparta in the war. In this case there might seem to be some potential for problematic treatment of both the Homeric 'enemy' god and the god of Delphi.

¹ The events of the plays are set after the action in the *Iliad* but were prefigured there: at 6.456-65 Hector prophesied a day of slavery for Andromache (cf. *Andr.* 99, *Hec.* 56, *Tro.* 1330).

² As Goff notes (2009: 30), '...tragedy regularly used the Trojan War to think through the Peloponnesian War.'

The discussion will focus, in separate sections, on *Andromache* and *Trojan Women*.

Hecuba is referred to but is not examined separately because Apollo is less important in this play than in the other two.³ These plays which treat similar epic material provide the opportunity to see how the treatment of Apollo reveals changes in the thought of the tragedian. The god is treated notably less problematically in *Trojan Women* than in *Andromache*. This shift will be examined in terms of the dramatic schemes of the plays and there will be consideration of how it might relate to changes in tragic response to the historical context.

Andromache (425?)⁴

Andromache is set after the fall of Troy, at Phthia and also at Delphi, and presents aspects of Apollo familiar to spectators from epic and earlier tragedy – as a warrior-god on the Trojan side and as the god of the oracle. We have seen in previous chapters how tragic Apollo is often highly ambivalent in terms of his morality and/or effectiveness in both of these roles. Apollo receives a relatively high number of textual references. There is a particularly strong questioning of his morality, more marked than in any other play of Euripides. He is presented as a destructive warrior-god and Delphi as a place of murder, a murder in which the god is involved. There is a pointed reminder of his ambivalent role in

³ Among Euripides' plays, gods are notably absent from *Hec.* (see Mastronarde, 2002: 35).

⁴ 425 is an uncertain date, seen as most likely by Diggle (1981-94), Stevens (1971), Lloyd (1994) and Allan (2000). The date of *Hec.* is also uncertain based on Arrowsmith (1958) and Collard (1991) who place it to approximately mid 420s on stylistic grounds. Arrowsmith notes that a parody of 173 has been seen in Arist. *Nub.* 1165-70 and an echo of 160 in *Nub.* 717-19 (produced 423); also 462 seems to refer to the Delian games, re-established in 426 (Thuc. 3.104).

another myth (as commander of matricide to Orestes), and implicit criticism of him through the sympathy evoked for his 'victims'. There are also several reminders that he is the killer of Achilles whose death here is represented both as a personal loss for Thetis and Peleus and as the loss of the Greek hero.

The first section will examine textual evidence for this apparently critical treatment of Apollo in the references to him and in the main episode in which he is involved – the murder of Neoptolemus at Delphi. We will see the effect of this portrayal of the god within the dramatic scheme of the play. As particularly strong criticism of Apollo in *Andromache* is combined with an apparent anti-Spartan element, we can also consider the possibility of relating this Apollo to the historical context – to evidence for perceptions of Delphi siding with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War.

Apollo, warrior-god and god of the oracle

In *Andromache* Euripides presents an apparently innovative combination of the myths of Neoptolemus and Orestes.⁵ Apollo appears as both epic warrior-god and god of Delphi, and the play also draws on other tragic traditions of the god's presentation: the Apollo/Orestes relationship, the raising of questions regarding the god's authority and efficacy as a healer, and the use of his traditional aspect as a distant god to suggest a certain ineffectiveness. His

⁵ *Andr.* is the first example of Orestes being involved in Neoptolemus' death. The schol. to *Andr.* 53 comments that Neoptolemus is killed by Machaereus but that in other writers such as Euripides he is killed by Orestes. As Gantz notes (1993, vol. 2: 691), 'If this remark will not quite prove that Euripides invented the idea, it does link him rather than earlier poets with it.'

roles as warrior-god and god of Delphi are related in the story and inform each other thematically: Delphi is the setting for the murder of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, for whose death Apollo was (partly) responsible at Troy. Apollo is the enemy god and Delphi is associated with violence; this includes a notable reminder of Apollo's matricidal alliance with Orestes.

As noted in the chapter on *Agamemnon*, the Apollo of the *Iliad* has 'cultural ambivalence' for Greeks as divine supporter of the Trojan side. The use of this aspect in the *Oresteia* was conceptually and thematically significant, introducing Apollo in *Agamemnon* in a potentially ominous way. Here its interest for Euripides and its continuing resonance for an Athenian audience are suggested by the importance of Apollo in this play relative to that of other gods who were equally prominent in Homer – Zeus and Athena. It was noted in the Introduction (p. 19) that the prominence of Zeus, Apollo and Athena in Homer is echoed in tragedy. Zeus and Athena could be said to 'evolve' further in tragedy, beginning in Aeschylus where Zeus, arguably, becomes the 'universal' god and Athena the civic goddess and protectress. Apollo's greater role in the Trojan War plays seems to reveal the particular resonance he has for the late fifth-century audience in his Homeric persona; the enemy god is still highly ambivalent for his Athenian audience and, especially in *Andromache*, he is notably problematised.

There are reminders of Apollo's Trojan allegiance: at 1009-10 we see him as the builder, with Poseidon, of the walls of Troy (see *Iliad* 7.452-3). He is also referred to several times as responsible for the death of Achilles (53, 1002-3, 1107-8, 1211-12). It was noted in Chapter 1 (p. 28) that *Andromache* has been seen to present a particularly negative Apollo

because of the number of references to the god as the killer of the Greek hero.⁶ In *Andromache* there seems to be some implicit criticism of Apollo in the sympathy evoked for Peleus over the loss of his son (615, 655, 1212) (Apollo is presented as partially responsible: Peleus blames Menelaus, 615, and Menelaus blames Paris, 655).

However, Apollo is not exclusively an enemy of the Greeks and he also helps to ruin Troy. He is said, at the opening of the choral passage at 1009-1046, to have abandoned the city to the god of war:

ὦ Φοῖβε πυργώσας τὸν ἐν Ἰλίῳ εὐτειχῇ πάγον
καὶ πόντιε κυανέαις ἵπποις διφρεύ-
ων ἄλιον πέλαγος,
τίνος οὔνεκ' ἄτιμον ὄργα-
νον χεροτεκτοσύνας Ἑ-
νυαλίῳ δοριμήστορι προσθέν-
τες τάλαιναν τάλαι-
ναν μεθεῖτε Τροίαν; (1010-1018)

Along with a warrior-god who is the enemy of the Greeks and who has abandoned the city whose cause he apparently supports, we see Delphic Apollo associated with murder. As reported in the Prologue by Andromache, Neoptolemus is at Delphi making amends to Apollo for his 'madness', having clamoured for revenge when the god killed Achilles: 'He hopes that, asking pardon for his former errors, he might perhaps obtain the god's goodwill for the future.' (54-55, trans Lloyd).

Euripides' version of this story presents a particularly destructive Apollo and a sympathetic Neoptolemus.⁷ In most versions Neoptolemus was killed by a Delphian, Machaereus,⁸

⁶ As Roberts notes (1984: 79).

⁷ See Stevens (1971 on 1165).

although this does vary in other sources; for example, it is even different in Pindar's odes from his *paians*. *Paian* VI 100-20 (=D6 Rutherford) treats Neoptolemus' death as divine punishment. Neoptolemus fails to escape fate and return home, which is said to be a consequence of Apollo's prophecy that he would never reach home because he killed Priam at the altar of Zeus *Herkeios* at Troy. Apollo kills him at Delphi. In *Nemean* 7.33-47 Neoptolemus is treated as honourable and the implication in the *Paian* that Neoptolemus was punished by Apollo for killing Priam is not mentioned.⁹ It specifies that a man killed Neoptolemus – although this could be Apollo acting in the form of another as Rutherford points out.¹⁰

In *Andromache* Apollo is involved in the murder of Neoptolemus, though not in any straightforward way, and we see him again at the centre of a complex divine/human responsibility for events. Orestes tells how Neoptolemus is to die at Delphi:

τοία γὰρ αὐτῷ μηχανὴ πεπλεγμένη
βρόχοις ἀκινήτοισιν ἔστηκεν φόβου
πρὸς τῆσδε χειρός. (995-97)

This presents Orestes as apparently responsible for the murder, and indeed he has personal motives (Hermione):

δείξω γαμεῖν σφε μηδέν' ὧν ἐχρῆν ἐμέ. (1001)

⁸ Asclepiades, *FGrH* 12 fr. 15; Pherec. *FGrH* 3 fr. 64a (cf. Paus. 4.17.4, 10.24.4-6).

⁹ Athanassaki (2009: 413ff.) discusses the difference between the two and the question of whether the *Nemean* was a kind of palinode aimed at appeasing the Aeginetans who were offended by the treatment of Apollo in the *Paian*. On *Paian* VI see Rutherford (2001: 298-338).

¹⁰ Rutherford (2001: 314).

But this murder takes place at the altar at Delphi and later in the same passage Apollo's involvement is suggested. Orestes says:

πικρῶς δὲ πατὴρ φόνιον αἰτήσῃ δίκην
ἀνακτα Φοῖβον· οὐδέ νιν μετάστασις
γνώμης ὀνήσῃ θεῶι δίδοντα νῦν δίκας,
ἀλλ' ἐκ τ' ἐκείνου διαβολαῖς τε ταῖς ἐμαῖς
κακῶς ὀλεῖται. (1002-6)

Orestes presents Apollo as grimly vengeful. This is of course his view of events,¹¹ but in this same passage we see how Euripides also draws on the spectators' awareness of the Orestes myth, and Apollo's matricidal command to Orestes, in the Chorus' disapproval:

βέβακε δ' Ἀτρείδας ἀλόχου παλάμαις,
αἰνὰ τ' ἐναλλάξασα φόνον θανάτου
πρὸς τέκνων ἐπηῦρεν.
θεοῦ θεοῦ νιν κέλευσμ' ἐπεστράφη
μαντόσυνον, ὅτε νιν Ἄργος ἐμπορευθεῖς
Ἀγαμεμνόνης κέλῳ, ἀδύτων ἀποβάς,
ἐκταν', ὧν ματὴρ φονεύς.
ὦ δαῖμον, ὦ Φοῖβε, πῶς πείθομαι; (1028-36)

There is a further possible reminder of this matricidal alliance at 995-97, discussed above, in the 'net' image which recalls the words used by Orestes at *Choephoroi* 556-58 as he describes his instructions from Apollo.¹²

Orestes also calls on 'Apollo the healer', another feature we have seen before in the tragic presentation of the god, although not as Παιᾶν here:

ὦ Φοῖβ' ἀκέστορ, πημάτων δοίης λύσιν. (900)

¹¹ And, as Allan notes (2000: 248), Orestes has a stake in justifying the god's collaboration in his revenge.

¹² Although Lloyd (1994 ad loc.) notes that the hunting net was a common metaphor for a murderous plot; see also *HF* 729ff., *Or.* 1421-24, *Soph. El.* 1476ff.

In tragedy, as we have seen, calling on Apollo to heal is usually ineffective and he will be far from a healing god in this play.

The Messenger reports the events at Delphi (1085ff.) where Orestes had aroused the Delphians, ‘speaking hostile words into the ear of each’ (1091). He says that Orestes was ‘the contriver of all these things’ (1115). The murder of Neoptolemus is brutal and described at length as he is pelted with rocks at the altar and then killed by a sword, his dead body attacked further by others in the mob.¹³ Neoptolemus is presented sympathetically and heroically, and is fighting for his life. This happens at Apollo’s own sanctuary; the passage at 1147ff., again, shows that the god is certainly involved, and even carries considerable responsibility, as his voice has rallied the fighting spirit of the men.¹⁴ In *Ion* Apollo was absent from the Delphic stage setting; here his ‘presence’ is reported as a voice, and one which seems to be controlling events:

πρὶν δὴ τις ἀδύτων ἐκ μέσων ἐφθέγξατο
δεινὸν τι καὶ φρικῶδες, ὦρσε δὲ στρατὸν
στρέψας πρὸς ἀλκὴν. ἔνθ’ Ἀχιλλέως πίτνει
παῖς ὀξύθήκτωι πλευρὰ φασγάνωι τυπεῖς
[Δελφοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὅσπερ αὐτὸν ὤλεσεν]. (1147-51)

The messenger offers his judgement:

τοιαῦθ’ ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοισι θεσπίζων ἀναξ,
ὁ τῶν δικαίων πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις κριτής,
δίκας δίδοντα παῖδ’ ἔδρας’ Ἀχιλλέως.

¹³ Allan notes (2000: 246) that the killers of Neoptolemus including their ‘divine sponsor’ are condemned by their disruption of sacrificial custom.

¹⁴ Lloyd (1994) and Morwood (2008) agree that there is no doubt that this is Apollo’s voice. Allan notes (2000: 251) that the indefinite τις does not have the function here of making uncertain the identity of the god responsible. See also Mastronarde (2002: 32) on ‘anonymous’ divine voices.

ἐμνημόνευσε δ' ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος κακὸς
παλαιὰ νείκη· πῶς ἂν οὖν εἶη σοφός; (1161-65)

Neoptolemus is at Delphi on a second visit to make amends.¹⁵ Apollo acts like a 'bad man' and the last line has the implication that, of course, Apollo *should* be *sophos*. This raises questions about Apollo's wisdom and his morality, a questioning suggested further by Peleus' lament: 'O city, Phoebus has taken my two children from me' (1211-12, trans. Morwood) especially if we see this lament as the emotional climax of the play.¹⁶ The spectators would again be reminded here that Apollo also carries responsibility for Achilles' death, and this further draws on their knowledge of the *Iliad* of which there are several echoes in the passage generally.¹⁷ It could also have recalled, if this were known at the time, the Aeschylean passage (fr. 350 *TrGF*, found in Plato, *Republic* 2.383a-b) in which Thetis condemns Apollo for killing Achilles after apparently promising him a long and sickness-free life. The god versus Achilles is powerfully re-played here with his son.

When Thetis appears at the end, she underlines the shamefulness of the action:

ὦν δ' οὐνεκ' ἦλθον σημανῶ, σὺ δ' ἐνδέχου.
τὸν μὲν θανόντα τόνδ' Ἀχιλλέως γόνον
θάψον πορεύσας Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἐσχάραν,

¹⁵ Lloyd (1994 ad loc.) notes that 'the god's vindictiveness is emphasized by the mythological innovation of N. being killed while trying to apologize [...]. The messenger's comment here shows that there was an appropriate vocabulary to condemn such behaviour.'

¹⁶ As does Lloyd (1994: 4).

¹⁷ The image of missiles flying like hail (1129) recalls *Il.* 12.154-60 and 278-89; Delphians fleeing like doves before a hawk (1140) recalls *Il.* 21.493-96 and 22.139-42. See further in Garner (1990: 134). A reflection of the *Il.* is also seen in the treatment of Neoptolemus' corpse (1149-54) which recalls *Il.* 22.367ff. and the treatment of Hector's body.

Δελφοῖς ὄνειδος, ὥς ἀπαγγέλλῃ τάφος
φόνον βίαιον τῆς Ὀρεστείας χερός. (1238-42)¹⁸

Thetis, as mother of Achilles whose loss she mentions on her entrance (1235), again recalls the *Iliad* (see 18.52-64 and 24.83-92), and the Aeschylus passage above. She provides a positive ending which serves to cast Apollo in an unfavourable light. Achilles is ‘living in his island home on the White Shore’ (1260-61, trans. Lloyd), the slave, Andromache, is to marry Helenus and her son’s descendants will rule Molossia (1243-44), and Peleus is to be deified (1255). Thetis is a minor deity here without the authority of Athena, but she does have the support of Zeus (1269). She evokes sympathy, and there is implicit criticism of Apollo as the god who murdered her son – this being both a personal loss and the death of the Greek hero.

In Euripides’ version of this myth there are clearly strong expressions of moral censure of Apollo. This to some extent, as seen, draws on established tragic tradition including that in Euripides’ other tragedies. Euripides’ deployment of Apollo always involves some questioning of his morality but final judgements are usually left more open than here. Criticism of the god in *Andromache* is not just by unreliable characters (as in *IT*, and in *Electra* and *Orestes* as we will see), nor does he have a contrasting positive side (as in *Alcestis*, *IT*, *Ion*). In looking for reasons for this we can consider the play’s relationship to the historical context.

¹⁸ Mastronarde notes a pattern whereby deities at the end of a play do not so much reveal an unknown fact as echo and confirm the feelings of the characters. Here Thetis ‘completes the theme of resentment towards Apollo that has been carried by the Chorus, the messenger and Peleus.’ (2005: 330).

Athens, Delphi and Sparta

The play may make some reference to contemporary events; *Andromache* has often been seen to express anti-Spartan feelings. Interpretation of some aspects of the play as what we might call propaganda, although not in the sense of state-directed, is in fact ancient. It is noted in the scholion to line 445 that Euripides uses *Andromache* as a mouthpiece to revile the Spartans because of the war that was in progress at the time; as Lloyd notes, however, this could just be inference from the text.¹⁹

The play has been seen to include, specifically, response to the massacre of Plataean prisoners by Sparta in 427.²⁰ Strong anti-Spartan feeling has been found in the unattractive portrayals of Spartans, Menelaus and Hermione, and in the anti-Spartan comments made by the sympathetically treated characters, Andromache and Peleus (445ff., 595ff. and 724-26). Lloyd notes that Greek chauvinism is confined to the Spartans, Hermione and Menelaus (170-76, 243, 261, 645-67), and is never displayed by Peleus.²¹ Peleus himself is sympathetic to Andromache and reserves his condemnation for the Spartans (445-53, 595-604).

It seems reasonable to find that *Andromache* engages with aspects of the Athenian audience's experience of contemporary events, possibly with the experience of audiences beyond Athens; *Andromache* may not have had its first performance at Athens although

¹⁹ Lloyd (1994: 11-12).

²⁰ Thuc. 3.51-68.

²¹ Lloyd (1994: 4).

this is an issue about which it is not possible to be certain.²² Whether produced outside Athens or in the city with a view to later productions elsewhere, it may address the same anti-Spartan sentiments; Thessaly and Molossia are prominent in the play and, as Allan notes,²³ the Thessalians and Molossians were united in an anti-Sparta alliance. Tragedy, including that of Euripides, does not tend to address contemporary events directly, but we can consider that Euripides may be exploring some underlying views and feelings among spectators regarding the enemy city.

The point here is whether we can relate any anti-Spartan element in the play to the critical treatment of Apollo. This is much less certain as it is dependent on the evidence for, and on our judgements of, Athenian perceptions that Delphi was siding with Sparta in the war, and on the assumption that this would influence perceptions of the god himself. The evidence we have is found in Thucydides. At 3.101.1 we see that the Spartan army gathered at Delphi, and at 1.118-19 we find: ‘...[the Spartans] also sent to Delphi to inquire from the god whether it would be wise for them to go to war. It is said that the god replied that if they fought with all their might, victory would be theirs, and that he himself would be on their side, whether they invoked him or not.’ At 2.54, because the full force of the plague

²² The schol. (on 445) reports that it was not performed at Athens. Hall (2000, Intro. to Morwood: xxx) finds it most probable that the play was written for the Royal house of Molossia. Thetis says that Andromache will go to Molossia and her son’s descendants will form a race of Kings, which may be a theatrical compliment to the king, bestowing on him a heroic Greek lineage. Allan notes (2000: 152) that Euripides did not invent the story of the Molossians’ descent from Neoptolemus – see Pind. *Nem.* 7.38-40. See Allan (2000: 150ff.) on the location of the play’s first performance. As Lloyd notes (1994: 12), even if not produced in the city, ‘There is nothing peculiar about the style of the play to set it apart from Euripides’ plays produced in Athens.’

²³ Allan (2000: 152ff.).

was felt at Athens and did not affect the Peloponnese seriously, we see that ‘What was actually happening seemed to fit in well with the words of this oracle’.²⁴ However, Thucydides does add here – ‘by those who knew of it’ – which reminds us that we do not know how wide awareness of this prophecy would have been.

Some scholars have found an anti-Delphi attitude in *Andromache*,²⁵ particularly in the way Neoptolemus’ death is dwelt on and in the sympathy evoked for him, and for Peleus who has lost both son and grandson at the hands of Apollo. Athenian attitudes to a Delphi perceived as on the same side as Sparta have been seen as the key to a ‘negative’ portrayal of Apollo in tragedy;²⁶ this idea has been rightly rejected, or at least modified, in the most recent criticism. Zacharia, discussing *Ion*, rejects the influence of Athens/Delphi relations.²⁷ She notes that the Athenian relationship with Delphi (and Delos) was complex and that Delphi itself had many subdivisions, adding, quite rightly, that ‘Apollo’s [...] Delphian servants were one thing, Apollo himself was another’. Bierl rejects political explanations for ‘negative’ treatments of Apollo in tragedy generally, noting that it is questionable whether ‘ephemeral developments’ such as Athens/Delphi relations could have such an influence as to explain Euripides’ Apollo.²⁸

There is some argument for *Andromache* as a special case because of the combination of

²⁴ Trans. Warner (1972). Hornblower (1992: 190) notes that Sparta was deeply interested in Delphi in 426.

²⁵ Parke and Wormell (1956), for example. See Introduction, n. 42.

²⁶ See Parke and Wormell (1956: 165-202).

²⁷ Zacharia (2003: 118ff.), although partly because of the date, *Ion* being produced nearly two decades after the beginning of the war and the plague.

²⁸ Bierl (1994: 84). See also Roberts (1984: 83).

the marked criticism of Apollo and the anti-Spartan element.²⁹ However, it is also possible to understand the Apollo of *Andromache* without reference to the historical context and to see him in terms of Euripides' use of epic within the dramatic scheme of the play. Lloyd has shown how *Andromache* draws on epic material and renews it, showing familiar characters from the Trojan war in new adventures but in characteristic ways. Orestes 're-enacts his definitive myth' and Neoptolemus' death, like that of Achilles, is partly due to Apollo.³⁰ Peleus' lament (as Lloyd notes) is the emotional climax of the play; this highlights the loss for which Apollo is responsible and is heightened further by the sympathetic treatment of Neoptolemus. We could see here Euripides creating from epic material a new human tragedy of loss and suffering caused by war, and exploiting the ambivalence of Homeric Apollo for his audience, for dramatic purposes, as the divinity responsible.

Drawing relationships between tragedy and the historical context is always uncertain and relating the plays to specific events is particularly problematic. We are limited by the dearth of historical evidence as well as by the difficulties in assessing how fifth-century Athenians thought. This means that it is not easy to reach conclusions about the relationship between tragic Apollo and political circumstances. We have seen that the problematic Apollo of *Andromache* can be explained in terms of the story and themes within the play. However,

²⁹ As Roberts (1984: 83) also notes.

³⁰ Lloyd (1994: 5-6).

we cannot conclude that none of the audience would see Apollo in terms of a politically suspect Delphi, nor that Euripides does not engage with such views among the spectators.

Trojan Women (415)³¹

In *Trojan Women* we will see a shift, since *Andromache*, in Euripides' treatment of the Trojan War. There are suggestions in the text of a more ambivalent presentation of the Greek side. A sympathetically presented Andromache calls the Greeks 'barbarians' (764) at a prominent moment when, led by Odysseus, they have decided to kill Astyanax.³² Within this dramatic scheme there is a rare portrayal of a vindictive Athena turning against her own side. The treatment of Achilles is also more ambivalent in *Trojan Women*; although this can also be seen within a theme of the anti-heroic, and as a problematisation of aspects of masculine behaviour also found in the earlier *Hecuba*.³³ In *Trojan Women* sympathy

³¹ The date is recorded in Ael. VII 2.8.

³² Barlow (1986 ad loc.): 'these lines might be said to contain the heart of the play. It is supposedly civilised Greeks who are really the barbarians, and the barbarians who are the civilised ones...'

³³ Apollo has little textual presence in *Hec.* so his comparison with Achilles in that play is not striking. In *Hec.* the depiction of Achilles is less favourable than in *Andr.*: Achilles' ghost demands the death of Polyxena (40-41, 92ff., 113-14). However, the behaviour of other Greek figures, and male figures generally, is also questionable. Odysseus, whose life Hecuba once saved, gives Polyxena as sacrifice to the dead Achilles (219ff.), Agamemnon seems cowardly and self-serving in being unwilling to help Hecuba directly but colluding in her revenge by allowing it (850ff.), Polymestor is avaricious (775-76, 995), a liar (989) and a murderer (25).

is evoked for Hecuba as Poseidon reports that she 'is unaware that her daughter Polyxena has been killed in a pitiable sacrifice at Achilles' tomb' (39-40, trans. Morwood).

The text raises the issue of the moral difference between the roles of Greek and barbarian in the fighting. The question is whether we see in the later *Trojan Women*, in this apparent heightened ambivalence in the treatment of the Greek side, some involvement with changed perceptions of the Peloponnesian War, and *Trojan Women* has been seen by some scholars as a response to certain events of the war. The play was produced only weeks before the Sicilian expedition within the hiatus in the conflict known as the peace of Nicias.³⁴ Athens during this time conquered Melos where, in 415, the year of production of *Trojan Women*, the Athenians killed the male population and enslaved the women and children.³⁵ The similarities between actual events and the play's story are marked: here after the fall of Troy and the deaths of all the men, surviving women wait to see to whom they will be assigned as slaves.³⁶ One problem is how we establish fifth-century views of Athenian activities in war. We do not really know how Athenians felt about Melos or about the

³⁴ See Thuc. 5.13-24.

³⁵ See Thuc. 5.32 on the enslavement of the women and children of Scione; 5.84-116 the Melian dialogue; 6.1-32 on the Sicilian expedition. Rabinowitz notes (2008: 49) that, although the play would have been written before the atrocity (that is, Melos), the archon appointed the playwrights during the summer before the campaign, 'but up-to-date allusions could have been added at the last minute.'

³⁶ See Croally (1994: 234) that the possibility of contemporary allusion is that much more obvious in *Tro.* than in some other plays. On this as comment on Athenian 'imperialism' generally see Parker and Sommerstein (1997: 155 and 72 respectively). On the relationship of the play with Melos, see Goff (2009: 31) on how it is not a straightforward representation and her list of those who *have* seen a direct relationship between the play and Melos (140, n. 51). Sidwell (2001: 30-44) doubts that Athenians would have made the connection with Melos at all.

taking of women and children as captives – activities which modern sensibilities might condemn.³⁷ It is also possible to give too much prominence to Melos specifically; this is an event which Thucydides takes as a paradigm, and there are other comparable examples.

Furthermore, in *Hecuba*, whose production was around ten years earlier and close to that of *Andromache*, the treatment of Greeks is already more critical in some respects. Achilles demands the death of Polyxena (40-41, 92ff., 113-14). The two sons of Theseus, referred to as sons of Athens (122-23), agree to the sacrifice, and Odysseus comes to take her to her death (218ff.). In addition, Neoptolemus is less of a sympathetic figure in *Hecuba* than in *Andromache*: he will preside over the sacrifice of Polyxena (224), and Polydorus' ghost reminds us that he killed Priam at an altar (23). Therefore, while it would probably be anachronistic to see *Trojan Women* as an anti-war play or an attack by the playwright on his society,³⁸ we might consider that Euripides, in all of these plays, raises awareness of the atrocities of war generally, and treats his theme in different ways.

Regarding Apollo, within this dramatic scheme he is apparently less criticised: he is not as destructive and is less obviously an enemy god. He is also not mentioned in *Trojan Women* as the killer of Achilles. There are even possibly some parallels made between Apollo and Achilles (as was seen above in Homer). At 40-44 and 500-3 we see closely juxtaposed references to Polyxena and Cassandra – Hecuba's daughters are victims of god and hero.

³⁷ See Sidwell (2001: 40-41). See Arist. *Pol.* 1255a, that it was a fact of war that the victors could enslave the surviving losers.

³⁸ See Goff (2009: 32-33) on the anachronism of both the idea of anti-war sentiment in 5th-century Athens, and the (post-Romantic) notion of seeing Euripides as the isolated artist critical of his society.

Again, if we assume the presence of anti-Delphi sentiment among spectators, and its influence on perceptions of Apollo, we might see this shift in the presentation of the god in these terms; a play which included more critical response to *Athenian* activities in war and less expression of anti-Spartan feeling might result in a less enemy-like god. However, we can, again, make sense of this treatment of Apollo within the dramatic scheme of the play; the more ambivalent Greek/Trojan relationship creates an Athena who is also more ambivalent and an Apollo who is less so by comparison.

As this shift in Apollo's characterisation in *Trojan Women* is seen primarily in his relation to the presentation of other characters, the following two sections will discuss the relationship of Apollo and Cassandra, and compare the presentation of Apollo with that of Athena.

Apollo and Cassandra

In *Trojan Women* the role of Cassandra is particularly prominent and we are reminded several times that Apollo caused her 'madness'. As discussed above, Apollo has traditionally been presented in tragedy within themes of gender conflict (notably in the *Oresteia* and *Ion*) and Cassandra has been seen as his victim before. Indeed *Trojan Women* seems to replay to some extent their roles in *Agamemnon* where she accuses him of being her destroyer and of leading her to her death. We might expect to see, in a play which focuses on the suffering of women at the hands of men, a replay of Apollo as a destroyer of women here. This Cassandra, however, is not quite the suffering heroine of *Agamemnon*. Her 'madness' is caused by Apollo but she is a far more ambivalent figure here, her mania

as much bacchic ecstasy as suffering. This in turn presents an Apollo who seems far less obviously destructive. We see here an example of Euripides' more 'open' presentation of Apollo in which serious criticisms of the god are simultaneously undermined by the presentation of other characteristics.

There was a reminder of the Apollo/Cassandra relationship in the earlier *Hecuba*. Hecuba says Cassandra was 'the prophetess of Phoebus' (827). The Chorus call her 'the frantic prophetess' (121), literally bacchant – βάκχης, and Hecuba, when her women bring in the shrouded corpse of Polydorus, says:

οἱ ἄλκιμα μῶν τὸ βακχεῖον³⁹ κάρα
τῆς θεσπιωιδοῦ δεῦρο Κασσάνδρας φέρεις; (676-77)

However, in *Trojan Women* Cassandra's role is more prominent and her mania is described more often, still in some places using the same bacchic language. Hecuba calls her:

ἐκβακχεύουσιν Κασσάνδραν (170)

and τλάμονα Κασσάνδραν. (248)

She has a long important presence on stage,⁴⁰ beginning at 306ff. when she rushes out carrying a flaming torch:

Hecuba: ...ἀλλὰ παῖς ἐμὴ
μαινάς θοάζει δεῦρο Κασσάνδρα δρόμῳ. (306-7)

Some characters blame Apollo specifically for her madness. We hear the following from Talthybius and Poseidon respectively:

³⁹ Literally 'the bacchic head' – an emotional periphrase emphasising the adjective (Collard, 1991 ad loc.).

⁴⁰ Rutherford (2001: 93) notes her importance in the trilogy overall: it seems clear that she spoke the prologue in *Alexandros*, the first of this trilogy.

εἰ μή σ' Ἀπόλλων ἐξεβάκχευσεν φρένας (408)

...ἦν δὲ παρθένον
μεθῆκ' Ἀπόλλων δρομάδα Κασσάνδραν ἀναξ,
τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τε παραλιπὼν... (41-43)

At 428-30 it seems that Apollo has also lied to Cassandra, promising her that Hecuba would die at Troy.

One passage in particular is apparently an allusion to *Agamemnon* (1264ff.) where Cassandra tears off the symbols of her prophetic gifts from Apollo. In *Trojan Women* she says:

ὦ στέφη τοῦ φιλτάτου μοι θεῶν, ἀγάλματ' εὖια,
χαίρετ'· ἐκλέλοιψ' ἐορτὰς αἷς πάροιθ' ἡγαλλόμην.
ἴτ' ἀπ' ἐμοῦ χρωτὸς σπαραγμοῖς, ὥς ἔτ' οὖς', ἀγνὴ χροά
δῶ θοαῖς αὖραις φέρεσθαι σοὶ τάδ', ὦ μαντεῖ' ἀναξ. (451-54)

Although, as Garner reminds us,⁴¹ not all of Cassandra in *Trojan Women* is necessarily Aeschylus but common property of Greek legend, this passage clearly is an allusion to *Agamemnon*. Aeschylus' Cassandra became a pervasive image – the manic prophetess was probably first seen in *Agamemnon* and may even have influenced later perceptions of a frenzied Pythia.⁴² She represents in *Agamemnon* a powerful figure of female suffering at the hands of a god.

In *Trojan Women*, however, Cassandra is more ambivalent and less a figure of total suffering. Euripides' allusion to Aeschylus' play, in fact, highlights his conceptual differences. At 252-53 we see that Apollo's influence is a blessing and a curse combined as

⁴¹ Garner (1990: 166).

⁴² See Goward quoted in Chapter 2, n. 66.

Cassandra will have a 'life forever unwed' as Apollo's virgin. Her bacchic frenzy also suggests ecstasy as much as pain. Papadopoulou notes Cassandra's 'radiant vigour' and the importance of the bacchic side (a 'Euripidean innovation') in her presentation. However, there is considerable irony in the representation of her 'positive' side; she is, for example, as Papadopoulou notes, bitterly ironic in claiming that Troy is better off than the Greeks (365-66).⁴³

It is not the case here that the Apolline and the Dionysiac represent opposing forces in Cassandra's experience – as Apolline pain and Dionysiac ecstasy – but, as seen at 408 above, they are inseparable.⁴⁴ Apollo is overtly blamed for being the cause of her madness in this play, but this is simultaneously undermined and Apollo in consequence appears to be much less unequivocally her destroyer.

Apollo and Athena

In this play where the moral differences between the two sides in the epic war are less distinct, the allegiances of all gods appear to be more shifting, including that of Apollo. There is no *deus ex machina* and, therefore, no final word from any god in this play. All gods are distant, not just Apollo. Goff notes the common critical emphasis on the fact that here the audience see the gods in action, the humans on stage never do.⁴⁵

⁴³ Papadopoulou (2000: esp. 526) .

⁴⁴ See Detienne (2001) on the close relationship of Apollo and Dionysus in cult

⁴⁵ Goff (2009: 38-41).

Athena is more prominent in *Trojan Women* than in the other two plays. Here, where the assigning of blame in war is more complex and Greek/barbarian less polarised, the contrast between the morality and effectiveness of Apollo and Athena is also less clear cut. We see a ‘negative’ treatment of the goddess from the point of view of Athenians – their protectress turning against them in one of only two unfavourable treatments of Athena in extant tragedy (the other being *Ajax*). Blame is laid on Athena for Troy’s suffering (not just on Apollo): the Chorus and Andromache blame her for starting the war and for the deaths of young men (561, 599).

Athena is prominent at the play’s opening, particularly so because, as Goff notes, it is unusual to have a second deity in a Prologue.⁴⁶ The goddess, supporter of the Greek side, now says that the Greeks have outraged her temple and she wants Poseidon to make the homeward voyage an unhappy one (66).⁴⁷ She says she is here for the Trojans who were her enemies:

τοὺς μὲν πρὶν ἐχθροὺς Τρῶας εὐφρᾶναι θέλω,
στρατῶι δ’ Ἀχαιῶν νόστον ἐμβαλεῖν πικρόν. (65-66)

As Goff comments, her ‘terrifying capriciousness’ is particularly striking here.⁴⁸ However, Athena makes it clear that the punishment is sanctioned by Zeus (78-81); he will send storm and lightning on the Greek ships. Athena frequently represents Zeus, as we have seen in Homer and *Eumenides*, and here it does modify her ambivalence to some extent.

However, it is unusual to see a vindictive Athena in tragedy and (at least in Aeschylus and

⁴⁶ Goff (2009: 36).

⁴⁷ See Goff (2009: 37) on the question of whether Athena punishes the Greeks for their destruction of Troy or merely for the outrage to her shrine.

⁴⁸ Goff (2009: 37).

Euripides) not to see Apollo being cast in a negative light in comparison with the goddess.

The different relative treatment of the gods here, therefore, would be striking.

Conclusion

Apollo in these three tragedies is relatively prominent as the Homeric warrior-god. He is not the focus for the more general expressions of blame of gods, the philosophical questions raised about their nature, and expressions of scepticism which are found particularly in *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*; these are usually centred on Zeus.⁴⁹ Hall notes an argument that 'Euripides puts on stage the most 'Homeric' of all Greek tragic gods precisely to undermine them';⁵⁰ this is true of Apollo here but, as we have seen, particularly so of his role in *Andromache*. The idea that this version of tragic Apollo relates to historical realities – a new resonance during the Peloponnesian War for the Trojan enemy god, alongside the god of a Delphi who takes the enemy side – has been considered. There is a stronger case, as has been seen, for this in *Andromache* than in any other play, but it still depends on an assumption that Athenians' perceptions of Apollo would be significantly influenced by political events at Delphi. It has been concluded that this is unlikely.

Similarly, the less problematic presentation of Apollo in *Trojan Women* has been considered in terms of a shift in this play to the expression of more critical attitudes to the Athenian role in the Peloponnesian War and of less apparent criticism of Sparta. Here too it has been shown that, rather than seeing this presentation of Apollo necessarily in relation to

⁴⁹ *Hecuba* 229-34, 488-91; *Tro.* 884-88, 1060-80, 1240-42, 1280.

⁵⁰ Hall (2008, Introduction to Morwood: xxxv – xxxvi).

historical events, it can be explained within the dramatic scheme of the play. The relating of aspects of tragedy to the historical context, especially to specific events, while it may offer some insight into dramatic meaning, is always problematic; study of Euripides' Trojan war plays has shown that this is also true of the tragic presentation of Apollo.

In the final chapter we return to the portrayal of oracular Apollo in Euripides' darker versions of the Orestes myth and an examination of the changes we see in the god's dramatic meaning in the late fifth century.

Chapter 9: The Darker Plays

Electra (420?) and *Orestes* (408)¹

The tragic presentation of oracular Apollo in these two versions of the Orestes myth from the late fifth century is highly ambivalent. Apollo is the target of sustained and widespread accusations of injustice and of causing human suffering. At the same time his distance carries strong suggestions of his responsibility for human isolation and confusion. He plays a role, in different ways, in the bleak endings of these plays. In *Electra* he is largely absent from the text and his stage absence at the end highlights his responsibility for the acute suffering of Electra and Orestes. In *Orestes* he appears on stage at the end only to reveal that his mythical solutions to human problems lack any sense of relevant divine justice. Any condemnation of the god is undercut to some extent, in both plays, by the undermining of the characters who judge him and, in *Orestes*, by the fact that the actions of the humans in his absence suggest no viable moral alternative to divine guidance. However, the moral questioning of Apollo is not offset by anything as positive as the vindication of a benign oracle, the hymnic praise of the god or the references to his musical side which were seen in the lighter plays.

This chapter also discusses Apollo's roles in these plays in relation to changes in the Athenian cultural and socio-political context by comparing them with the *Oresteia*. The fact that this *Electra* is roughly contemporary with Sophocles' *Electra* also provides the

¹ On stylistic grounds, the date of *El.* is now usually taken to be between 422 and 416, or within a narrower range. For discussion see Lloyd (2005: 17), March (2001: 6). The schol. to *Or.* 371 tells us that the play was first performed during the archonship of Diokles.

opportunity to compare the Apollo figures of Sophocles and Euripides in versions of the same myth (not assuming the chronological precedence of either play as this is uncertain). The two plays will be examined in turn; *Electra* will be covered less extensively as there is less relevant textual material.

Electra

The plot of *Electra* is broadly the same as that of *Choephoroi* in its reunion of brother and sister and the killing of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. Euripides, however, focuses less on the divine justice, or injustice, of the matricide than on human experience and motivation. This focus involves considerable condemnation of Apollo by the characters, and this has often been seen as authorial criticism of the god and his oracle.² Humans do continually blame Apollo for their suffering and isolation, the sense of which is very strong in this dark play, but the moral judgement of Apollo is in fact left open as the opinions of these human characters are in turn undermined by aspects of their presentation.

We will see, first, the effects of Apollo's absence from the text in this tragic version of a myth to which he is central. The second section will examine the characters' accusatory comments on Apollo, and how their isolation and suffering are highlighted, but how, at the same time, their judgements are undermined. Finally, we will see the effect of Euripides' 'return to myth' ending, including the epiphany of minor deities who add their comments on Apollo only to contribute to the distinct lack of closure.

² See Case (1902: 197), Kitto (2002: 330), Vermeule (1959: 4), Ferguson (1987 ad loc.).

Apollo's absence from the text

We have seen different ways in which Apollo has been 'absent' in tragedies. His remoteness and his stage absences, particularly at the endings of plays, have carried suggestions of ineffectiveness. In this version of the Orestes myth Apollo is absent in the sense of receiving relatively few references in the text, and this too is meaningful. It suggests his abandonment of his charge and highlights the isolation and *aporia* of the humans. In his absence, Apollo is characterised largely through the opinions of him which are expressed by the main characters. There are no choral passages of praise, no mention of Apollo in fact by the Chorus, and Euripides does not draw, to any extent, on the spectators' experience of the god's cults by references to these aspects.³ This is in marked contrast to the use of 'association' in Aeschylus and Sophocles whereby Apollo is characterised by, for example, the suggestions made by references to the *Lykeios* aspect of the god – an aspect which was highly significant in suggesting his dark side.

Euripides is similar to Sophocles in his shift of focus away from Apollo's central role in the matricide and issues of the justice of revenge and onto human experience (although, as noted above, uncertainty about dating precludes assumptions about the direction of any influence). In Euripides, however, the effect is that Apollo is characterised entirely by the opinions expressed by the human characters (and those of the lesser deities at the end) as the tragedian adapts Apollo to his typically multi-voiced approach.

³ He is cited as either Apollo, Phoebus or Loxias.

From early on, Apollo is conspicuously absent and the matricide command is underplayed.

All we hear from Orestes about the divine command is:

ἀφίγμαι δ' ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων. (87)

The use of the word μυστηρίων (mysteries or mystery rites) seems to be deliberately vague. We do not hear Apollo's words, either directly or quoted by Orestes, even specifically that it *was* Apollo. Translators have sometimes specified the god, as in Vellacott's 'Apollo's oracle',⁴ but I find meaning in the fact that the text does not. The passage is in marked contrast to both *Choephoroi* (269-96) where Orestes reports Apollo's threats in detail, and to Sophocles' *Electra* (32-37) where Orestes also quotes Apollo who has told him how to carry out the murder. The focus shifts onto personal motivation and away from the idea of a divinely ordered revenge. Apollo is sidelined to some extent but, as we will see, the alternative to his guidance is morally no better (a theme which will be even more highly developed in *Orestes*).

The first reference to Apollo by name is when Electra, seeing strangers near the house (actually Orestes and Pylades) and in fear of ambush, calls instinctively on Apollo, the god who will later desert her:

ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλων, προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν. (221)

The god is represented on stage by artefacts. This is a similar technique to that of Sophocles in *OT* but is not used to the same extent here. Electra may again be addressing a statue of Apollo or the *Aguieus* altar.⁵ She does not address Apollo as *Lykeios*, unlike

⁴ Vellacott (1963).

⁵ Poe (1989: 131) comments that there was probably an *Aguieus* altar on stage wherever action took place before a house or palace. Ferguson (1987 ad loc.) believes Electra addresses a statue near the door. At 217 in

Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, Jocasta in *OT* and Clytemnestra and Electra in Sophocles' *Electra* who, as shown above, all call on him as this god when addressing the *Aguius* altar. Euripides thus seems to avoid characterising Apollo as fearsome and wolf-like, leaving the question of judgement of the god more open.

The way the murder is to be carried out highlights Apollo's absence from the decision-making:

Electra: λέγ', ὦ γεραιέ, τάδε Κλυταιμήστραι μολών.
 <Old Man: >
 <Electra:> λεχώ μ' ἀπάγγελλ' οὔσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ. (651-52)

The use of deception is Electra's idea which may be made particularly prominent here.⁶

This is also seen at 970 (discussed below) and we can compare *Choephoroi* 556-59 where Apollo instructed Orestes to kill Clytemnestra and Aegisthus with the same craft they used themselves. In Sophocles' *Electra* (33ff.) it is explicitly Apollo's instruction to kill with craft or stealth. In contrast, there is quite clearly here a focus on human motivation and impulse rather than on divine command. This is seen further in the fact that Pylades is mute (as in Sophocles' *Electra*). If he 'represents' Apollo in *Choephoroi* (and possibly in *IT*), in this play there is no word from the god even through an intermediary.

Vermeule (1959) we see 'huddled beside the altar' although altar is not actually in the text. See further on Electra's 'little prayer' in Mikalson (1989: 82).

⁶ Diggle marks the line as spoken by the Old Man. The MS (L) gives two lines to Electra here which, as Cropp notes (1988 ad loc.), is improbable by the conventions of stichomythia. I would suggest that the two lines together here could have had the effect of highlighting that this is Electra's suggestion.

The viewpoints of the characters

The characterisation of Apollo through the opinions of other characters is the main feature of his presentation in Euripides, especially in these two darker plays. There is more widespread and incisive criticism of Apollo by characters here than in the *Oresteia*, in Sophocles or in Euripides' lighter tragedies. Aeschylus' Orestes expresses doubts about Apollo's command but only so far as to ask 'Are not such oracles to be trusted?' (*Choephoroi* 297, trans. Collard). In Sophocles' *Electra* there is also no overt criticism of Apollo by characters; the nearest to an expression of doubt about the god is by Orestes after the killing of Clytemnestra (1424). We see some doubts expressed about Apollo and some condemnation of the god in *IT*, mostly by Orestes, but it is balanced there by the 'positive' turn in the plot, in which Apollo is to some extent involved, and by the presentation of his more benign side in the choral passages.

Orestes condemns Apollo (967-81) in his exchange with Electra. He doubts Apollo's wisdom:

ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ' ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας. (971)

He also questions his authority:

οὐ τὰν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε. (981)

At 979 he suggests that a demon was in Apollo's place (expressing his own fears, as well as, typically of tragedy, possible Athenian suspicions about Delphic mediation):

ἄρ' αὐτ' ἀλάστωρ⁷ εἶπ' ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῶι; (979)

⁷ Cf. *Or.* 1668-69.

He condemns Apollo when, about to kill his mother, he is charged with emotion, driven by his revulsion of the deed (969) and by his fear of personal and legal consequences (977).

This is underlined here by the fact that the oracle is questioned *before* the matricide, unlike in *Choephoroi*.⁸

Orestes' views of Apollo, in a moment when not charged with personal emotion, are expressed quite differently. At the end of his non-plot digression, prompted by Electra's poor home and farmer husband, on the significance of social position and wealth and morality, and before he has been recognised, he says that Electra's brother may still come because:

...Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἔω. (399-400)

Orestes defends Apollo and criticises only human prophecy, although, again, he voices fears of human manipulation of oracles.

After the murder Orestes says:

ἰὼ Φοῖβ', ἀνύμνησας δίκαι'
ἄφαντα, φανερά δ' ἐξέπρα-
ξας ἄχεα, φόνια δ' ὤπασας
λὰχε' ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἑλλανίδος.
τίνα δ' ἑτέραν μόλω πόλιν;
τίς ξένος, τίς εὐσεβῆς
ἐμὸν κᾶρα προσόψεται
ματέρα κτανόντος; (1190-97)

⁸ As noted by Roberts (1984: 99).

This passage has been seen to express authorial condemnation of Apollo.⁹ However, Orestes' judgements again reveal his state of mind; he doubts now the actual justice of Apollo as he suffers under the weight of the deed itself, and he voices the problems of living with the consequences of divine ordered actions within human society.

These are Orestes' opinions and personal feelings. Any judgements made are to some extent undermined by his presentation. Scholars' opinions on Orestes and Electra have tended to be negative; they have often found them to be callous, self-centred and cowardly.¹⁰ Electra's motives, in particular, have been seen as personal and selfish;¹¹ although there have been other opinions notably that of Lloyd who, rejecting the influence of modern psychology, 'defends' her character.¹²

It is difficult to be certain about the characterisation of the humans. Orestes could seem to be weak and vacillating (612, 967), especially if we compare the resolution of the Old Man (613) and Electra (647). His doubts over killing his mother may represent weakness or a moral compunction that Electra seems to lack. He may seem cowardly (94-97) or just careful.

⁹ Hartigan (1991: 125): 'Apollo's command [...] is declared by Euripides to be invalid.'

¹⁰ See Vermeule (1957, Intro.: 5), Kitto (2002: 333-36), Conacher (1967: 201), Arnott (1981: 181) and Hartigan (1991: 114-15). Roberts (1984: 96) finds the oracle to be 'in the wrong' and does not modify this with any extensive discussion of the characterisation of Electra and Orestes.

¹¹ See Halporn (1983: 101). Hartigan (1991: 122) notes Electra's lack of interest in avenging her father's murder.

¹² Lloyd (1986b: 2ff.).

Electra, in contrast with Orestes, is clever, indeed sophistic, but reveals her morally simplistic motivation of revenge above all (see 967-81). In this play it is she who provides the momentum for the murder. We can compare her comment at line 970 with *Apollo's* instructions to kill with 'craft' at *Choephoroi* 556-59 (compare, similarly, Electra at 967 and how, at *Choephoroi* 899, it is *Pylades* who responds to Orestes' question). In other places Electra could be seen as self-pitying (114ff. and 199ff.) and delusional (175ff.), although Lloyd sees her behaviour in terms typical of Greek lamentation rather than as the self-indulgence seen through modern psychology.¹³ One moral argument against both of them is the viciousness of the murder of Aegisthus which is dwelt on at length (774ff), but this too is open to interpretation.¹⁴

How we see the character of Clytemnestra is also important but, again, it is not possible to be conclusive; is she, for example, more sympathetic thus casting her children in a more dubious light? There is some evidence for this in her self-awareness (1105-6), and at 1109-10 where she admits that her anger against her husband is excessive. She had also rescued Electra from Aegisthus' violence (28ff.) and she shows concern for her daughter (1107ff.). At 1011ff. in her own defence she stresses the murder of Iphigenia as her motive for revenge, exacerbated by Agamemnon's return with Cassandra as his concubine. She suggests that she only began her liaison with Aegisthus after this (1037-38). Her combination of genuine justification and self-interest preclude any final moral judgement

¹³ Lloyd (1986b: 2)

¹⁴ Porter (1990: 279) comments on 'Murder at a Sacrifice/Festival' that the context of a religious rite can be seen to reaffirm the heinous nature of the crime. In contrast Lloyd (1986: 16) notes that a person sacrificing has no special protection from the gods.

of her. Moreover, the critical views of Clytemnestra (265, 1071ff., 314ff.) are expressed by Electra and could be said to characterise the daughter – as resentful, sexually and materially jealous – as much as the mother.

There is some sympathy evoked for Orestes. In the passage at 967-81 above, the audience are reminded of the central moral dilemma of the matricide and of his impossible situation. At the end of the play, sympathy is evoked for Orestes *and* Electra in their separation and exile (1308-10, 1314-15, 1321-24, 1331-37).

We cannot determine precisely how spectators would perceive the characters of Electra and Orestes; they may be seen to reveal moral weakness, or to represent realism pitted against myth; but there does seem to be some moral questioning of them, especially in the shift away from the motive of revenge for Agamemnon onto the personal motives of Electra. It is a feature of the darker plays of Euripides that criticism of Apollo by strong, reputable characters is avoided. Electra and Orestes are not final arbiters but not totally discredited either. Judgement of Apollo, therefore, becomes impossible as there are no other aspects in his presentation serving to support or deny their opinion – no suggestion of the wolf-like qualities of Apollo *Lykeios* nor choral passages of praise of the god. Instead, Euripides appears to engage with multiple and shifting views in his society in this presentation of Apollo through various individual voices.

The ending

At the end of the play, Apollo's stage absence is, as usual, meaningful. The epiphany of the

Dioscuri (1233ff.) introduces another voice to add comment on the god. Castor says:

δίκαια μὲν νυν ἦδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾷς.
Φοῖβος δέ, Φοῖβος – ἀλλ' ἀναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός,
σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὦν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά.
αἰνεῖν δ' ἀνάγκη ταῦτα· τάντεϋθεν δὲ χρή
πράσσειν ἃ Μοῖρα Ζεὺς τ' ἔκρανε σοῦ πέρι. (1244-48)

This is a complex statement of events. Apollo gave his bidding but other forces – Zeus and Destiny – are also at work and it is not clear whether they are stronger forces than Apollo.¹⁵ Moreover, the comment on Apollo himself is paradoxical – the wise god gave unwise bidding.

This speech is within a 'return to myth' ending in the sense that Castor, Pollux and the Furies (otherwise absent from the human drama – Orestes does not speak of them) either appear or are mentioned at the end.¹⁶ The speech has been seen as intentionally and unconvincingly 'mythical' and the importance of its content underplayed because of this¹⁷ (as has been, for similar reasons the content of Apollo's speech at the end of *Orestes*). I think, however, that we should consider its content. It suggests that the deity has a wider view of the causes for events and the limitations of human knowledge, but the opinions are not final. Castor comments further on Apollo:

καὶ σοί· Φοίβωι τήνδ' ἀναθήσω
πρᾶξιν φονίαν. (1296-97)

¹⁵ See Mastronarde (2005: 322) on the flexibility of the power relationship between fate and the gods.

¹⁶ From the earlier 'realism' suggested by, for example, the humble setting, the farmer husband, the parodied recognition scene, and the Achilles ode (432-86) which presents, as Gellie comments (1981: 7), 'the world the play rejects.'

¹⁷ See Gellie (1981: 8).

μοῖρά τ' ἀνάγκη τ' ἦγ' ἐς τὸ χρεῶν,
Φοίβου τ' ἄσοφοι γλώσσης ἐνοπαί. (1301-2)

We should consider, first, the nature of the speaker. The Dioscuri are lesser deities – sons of Zeus but of a lower status than Apollo (1245);¹⁸ the audience, therefore, would be unlikely to take Castor's remarks as a final judgement, one that vindicates the opinions of the humans. Apollo is absent from the scene again, here receiving neither vindication nor any kind of final condemnation.

It is also notable that the references to *Eumenides* are within an ending where there is a general undermining of myths. At 1281 we learn that Helen has not been to Troy:

Ζεὺς δ', ὥς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,
εἰδῶλον 'Ελένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον. (1282-83)¹⁹

Euripides challenges the values both of the myth of Orestes and of its best known version, that of the *Oresteia*. We see further how he points up his thematic and conceptual differences from Aeschylus at 1252-91 in the references to the trial scene in *Eumenides*. There are (as in *IT*) allusions to plot details, especially at 1252-55, 1266-67 and 1270-71.²⁰ This highlights Apollo's absence here. We do not see him carrying out a role at the trial as he does in *Eumenides*. It is an almost perfunctory summary of the action at that trial where

¹⁸ Roberts notes that 'Phoebus – yet he is my lord' suggests reluctance to criticise a superior rather than a recognition that it is impossible in the nature of things that Apollo be anything but wise (1984: 100). Cropp (1988 on 1233-37) sees them as having 'intermediate status' between Zeus/Apollo and the humans.

¹⁹ Cf. *Hel*.

²⁰ Although not all of the details of the myth are Aeschylean: at 1258-60 Euripides reverts to the mythical version of the founding of the Areopagus court in which Ares, not Orestes, is the first murderer (cf. *IT* 943-46).

Apollo was centre stage. All we hear of him here is that ‘Loxias will take/all blame on himself for having asked your mother’s death’ (1266-67, trans. Vermeule). Roberts comments that the reason for Orestes’ acquittal here is quite different from the *Oresteia* where Orestes is acquitted because Apollo speaks for Zeus, and that this is just almost by definition. In Euripides, Orestes will be acquitted because Apollo told him to do the deed and the injustice is Apollo’s fault not his.²¹ I am not sure such a final judgement of Apollo is possible here.

The trial reference echoes the Apollo of Aeschylus and at the same time points up the differences in Euripides’ own technique, his view of the god and his role in the myth, especially in the shift to the focus on human suffering: soon after this we see the grief of Orestes and Electra as they are to be separated. Euripides also made references to the Aeschylean trial scene in *IT* but, in *Electra*, we see the different effect of this in a dark play. In *IT* this trial reference is more positive; it is at a stage in the story where progress towards resolution has begun, and Orestes’ comments on Apollo are in praise of what Apollo did for him (939-86). Athena’s absence here can be seen in terms of the lack of promotion of Athens as a solution generally. Castor says ‘Courage. You go/to the holy city of Pallas. Endure.’ (1319-20, trans. Vermeule) but it is not relevant here to the human experience. In *Eumenides* Apollo was marginalised by the process of a democratic trial but here such a trial is not a solution either.

Finally in this ending, we see expressions of human confusion and lack of understanding in Electra’s final question about Apollo:

²¹ Roberts (1984: 100).

τίς δ' ἔμ' Ἀπόλλων, ποῖοι χρησμοὶ
φονίαν ἔδοσαν μητρὶ γενέσθαι; (1303-4)

Castor replies:

κοινὰ πράξεις, κοινοὶ δὲ πότμοι. (1305)

Electra shares the destiny of her family. This reply does not blame Apollo, but he *has* caused their suffering. The actions they have carried out at the god's command have brought no satisfaction, only further misery. As Roberts comments, 'obedience to an oracular command should result in good fortune'.²² They are pitiful and genuinely moving in their exile and permanent separation. Orestes is told he will have happiness (1291) and we may accept this prediction; perhaps Castor's comment suggests the possibility, but it is the sense of grief which dominates.

The entry of these lesser deities at the end while ostensibly providing a sense of closure, in fact, suggests a lack of resolution, especially in comparison with an epiphany by Athena. Euripides clearly shows the suffering caused by Apollo while leaving the audience unable to make a final judgement on him.

Conclusion

In *Electra* Euripides' use of the Orestes myth, and of oracular Apollo, presents a bleak picture of human experience of the divine – one that stresses human isolation and suffering. The contrast with the *Oresteia* invites the spectator to relate this to the changed context: a new era of rationalist speculations, the mood of a city at war. However, as noted,

²² Roberts (1984: 99).

Electra was produced within a short time of the production of *IT* where Euripides involves oracular Apollo, in the same myth, in themes of resolution and redemption; and in *Ion*, which was also produced within the same period, the playwright introduces a central and important cult role for the god as Apollo *Patrōos*. We do not, therefore, see any chronological development of increasing scepticism but rather marked shifts of theme and of use of Apollo in different kinds of tragedy. *Electra* is a play in which Euripides presents a darker response to the Athens of the last two decades of the fifth century and its Apollo is a darker god.

Orestes

The dramatic meaning of Apollo in *Orestes* is related closely to the structure of the play; discussion of the passages, therefore, will be grouped into the three sections into which the play naturally falls in terms of the god's presentation. In the first we will see how he is condemned for the matricide and blamed for the suffering of Electra and Orestes by all of the characters. The characterisation of those who criticise him, especially that of Orestes who has a considerable role in the moral responsibility for the matricide, will also be discussed. It will be important to consider this widespread condemnation of Apollo in terms of its dramatic effect; its emphasis makes more marked the shift in the central section of the play where, after line 599, there are in contrast no references to Apollo;²³ we see in this section that the behaviour of the humans is morally no better, and may even be worse, in the god's absence. Finally, at 1625ff. we see Apollo's highly problematic

²³ With the exception of the Messenger's comment (954) and the Phrygian's reference to the walls of Troy as 'Apolline' (1389).

epiphany in the ‘return to myth’ ending which is out of key with the complex human drama which has preceded and suggests that gods, represented again by oracular Apollo, have no solutions to human problems, individual or social.

The characters’ views of Apollo

The play is set six days after the murder of Clytemnestra and, as in *IT* and *Electra*, in a transitional period of the myth. Electra speaks the prologue and makes the first reference to Apollo:

Φοίβου δ’ ἀδικίαν μὲν τί δεῖ κατηγορεῖν;
πείθει δ’ Ὀρέστην μητέρ’ ἢ σφ’ ἐγείνατο
κτεῖναι, πρὸς οὐχ ἅπαντας εὐκλειαν φέρον·
ὅμως δ’ ἀπέκτειν’ οὐκ ἀπειθήσας θεῶι. (28-31)

A somewhat flatly characterised Electra seems to state the matricide and the alliance of Apollo and Orestes as known facts (as indeed they would be to the audience) and introduces Euripides’ approach to the matricide in this play.²⁴ This approach emphasises the moral dilemma, reverting to making it clear that Apollo *has* commanded the murder (compare *Electra* above), but also revealing Orestes’ moral responsibility.

Helen, in the first of a series of surprise entrances (culminating in that of Apollo himself), condemns Apollo more overtly:

ἐς Φοῖβον ἀναφέρουσα τὴν ἀμαρτίαν. (76)
τοῖν τ’ ἀθλίοιιν τοῖνδ’, οὓς ἀπώλεσεν θεός. (121)

²⁴ Wright (2008: 53) notes Electra’s ‘odd detachment’ and her ‘illusion-breaking’ addresses to the audience (1-70, 128-29).

The presentation of Helen has been seen as vivid; scholars' views on her character, however, have been diverse and she is not easily defined.²⁵ Electra's attack on her seems overstated (126ff.),²⁶ especially as Apollo will later say that she was the gods' instrument in starting the Trojan war (1639-41). Her comments on Electra's situation (71-80), her request to Electra to go to her mother's tomb (94), her cutting off only the tips of her hair as an offering (128) could be seen as tactless and shallow or innocent and guileless. It is consequently difficult to know how spectators would take her judgements of Apollo, but she begins the widespread condemnation of the god by characters in this first section.

Censure of Apollo is also presented through stage action. The sleeping figure of Orestes on stage (as indicated by Electra at 34) visually underlines the comments made on his suffering and Apollo's responsibility for it. The Chorus too blame Apollo for Orestes' condition (160-61). We do not see here the contrasting choral view of the Apollo of *IT* and *Alcestris*, rather the Chorus express sympathy for Orestes and Electra and add to the sense of universal censure of the god.

At 162-65 Electra condemns the god and his oracle; the reference to Themis, goddess of law, points up Apollo's *unlawfulness*:

ἄδικος ἄδικα τότε ἄρ' ἔλακεν ἔλακεν, ἀπό-
φονον ὅτ' ἐπὶ τρίποδι Θέμιδος ἄρ' ἐδίκασε

²⁵ See Burnett (1971: 199-200), Willink (1986, on 71-125), West (1987, Intro.: 34), Hartigan (1991: 130-31), Greenberg (1962: 162).

²⁶ Electra notably uses the word ἀπολλύω (130) about Helen, the word for 'destroy' which would have had strong echoes of Apollo's name at the time (see Chapter 1, n. 46). Helen used it (121) in criticising Apollo. See its use also at 572 and 956 below. See also n. 27 below on Electra's forms of expression.

φόνον ὁ Λοξίας ἐμᾶς ματέρος. (162-65)

She turns to stronger criticism, even accusing Apollo of killing herself and Orestes:

ἐξέθυσ' ὁ Φοῖβος ἡμᾶς
μέλεον ἀπόφονον αἶμα δούς
πατροφόνου ματρός. (191-93)

ἐξέθυσε is a very strong term to use for Apollo's treatment of them in its suggestion that the god has sacrificed his human charges. This appears to be blatant criticism of his morality but is not necessarily criticism by the author. Gibert notes that explanations for this usage usually note that it is a bold, odd or violent metaphor, but also include the comment that Electra is exaggerating.²⁷

The Chorus comment next on Orestes' action – δίκαι μὲν – and Electra adds – καλῶς δ' οὐ (194).²⁸ Electra re-states the central moral dilemma of the Orestes myth. Her own judgement, however, is undermined: immediately after (196ff.) she also blames her mother for killing them, again suggesting that this is Electra's melodramatic way of expressing herself (see n. 27), and weakening the attack on Apollo somewhat. These examples show that, even in this first section, the condemnation of Apollo is never totally convincing as characters' judgements are undermined by aspects of their presentation.

However, sympathy is also evoked for the characters. Orestes is a vision of madness

²⁷ Gibert (2003: 159). He cites Willink (1986, on 191) who comments that, in general, Electra's language is characterized by exaggerated turns of phrase.

²⁸ Allan (2000: 249, n. 70) notes that 'The line's bold antithesis (emphasized by the metrical repetition of the divided bacchiac dimeter) exposes the problematic morality of Apollo's command.'

caused by the god. Indeed he extravagantly praises the goddess of sleep – his only escape from Apollo (211-13).²⁹ Orestes calls on Apollo for help as he is still pursued by Furies, albeit as an internalised symptom of his madness:

ὦ Φοῖβ', ἀποκτενοῦσί μ' αἱ κυνώπιδες
γοργῶπες, ἐνέρων ἱέρεια, δειναὶ θεαί. (260-61)

Electra, not Apollo, is his protector here (217ff.) but Orestes also mistakes her for a Fury (264-65), effectively expressing her dual relationship with him as helper and co-conspirator (with which the audience would be familiar from previous versions of the myth, and see 32). It also underlines Apollo's abandonment of both of them.

The dual accusations of immoral command and ineffective support would again evoke for the audience Apollo's cult roles of oracular and ephebic god, as seen particularly in the *Oresteia* and *IT*. Apollo is accused of his unjust command as oracular god, guilty of ineffectiveness in his role as ephebic mentor.³⁰ Here especially notable is the suffering ephebe. Apollo, always questioned in this role in tragedy, has here driven his ephebic charge to madness.

A greater focus on Orestes' madness and suffering is created by the use of Apollo's most familiar attribute, the bow. Orestes calls for this gift from the god (268-70). Its use

²⁹ Wright (2008: 68) notes how he calls the goddess 'intelligent' in contrast to 417 where Apollo's intelligence is questioned. See Willink (1986, on 417) that ἀμαθία had become a stock reproach of gods in tragedy especially (with oxymoron) of Apollo who was traditionally σόφος (see *El.* 1246, *Andr.* 1165, cf. also *HF*, 347). I find that ἀμαθέστερός (417) refers rather to Apollo's ignorance of justice and right and is, therefore, a criticism of his morals rather than his intelligence. See n. 35 below.

³⁰ See Bierl (1994: 95).

contrasts revealingly with the *Oresteia*. We do not know if this is a real bow here or the product of Orestes' imagination. It seems unlikely that Electra would hand the mad Orestes a weapon to fight off imagined demons (she suggests they are imaginary at 258-59) but he does seem to use one at 273-74.³¹ In *Eumenides* Apollo threatened the Furies with an actual bow. Here an isolated, mad Orestes uses either a real bow against imagined Furies, or both are imagined. After this 'shooting' the fit of madness does seem to end. Orestes becomes calm and notices his suffering sister. If Apollo's bow has helped to rid the Furies, Orestes does not acknowledge it and both before (275-76) and after the 'shooting' continues to blame the god:

...Λοξίαι δὲ μέμφομαι,
 ὅστις μ' ἐπάρας ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον
 τοῖς μὲν λόγοις ἠΰφρανε τοῖς δ' ἔργοισιν οὐ.
 οἶμαι δὲ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, εἰ κατ' ὄμματα
 ἐξιστόρουν νιν μητέρ' εἰ κτεῖναί με χρή,
 πολλάς γενείου τοῦδ' ἄν ἐκτεῖναι λιτὰς
 μήποτε τεκούσης ἐς σφαγὰς ὤσαι ξίφος,
 εἰ μήτ' ἐκεῖνος ἀναλαβεῖν ἔμελλε φῶς
 ἐγὼ θ' ὁ τλήμων τοιάδ' ἐκπλήσειν κακὰ. (285-93)

The accusations of a 'mad' Orestes reveal that he does have some insight, especially in his comment on Apollo's 'words' (287). It is the humans who do the *deeds* and suffer the consequences. A human alternative to Apollo's law is proposed here, in the opinion of his

³¹ For various views on whether or not this is a real bow, see Arrowsmith (1958, stage direction at 271), Greenberg (1962: 164), Hartigan (1991: 133, n. 24), Mastronarde (2002: 25-26, n. 44), Burnett (1971: 202-3), Zeitlin (1980: 54), Roberts (1984: 111), West (1987, on 268), Wright (2008: 38). The schol. commented that a real bow was used once, but that actors contemporary with him now pretended to use one.

father, with a suggestion of this being superior.³² However, in the mid section of the play we will see a moral questioning of the human alternatives to divine guidance.

The Chorus underline the suffering and the madness of Orestes and the responsibility of Apollo (324-335). They then introduce Menelaus (348). Further sympathy is elicited for Orestes in their exchange. For example, Menelaus' question, 'And have you not purged the blood on your hands in the prescribed way?' (429, trans. West) enables Orestes to tell us 'No I am excluded from homes wherever I go' (430, trans. West). There is no mention of purification by Apollo here, but we see the vulnerable position of an unpurified Orestes at Argos. The Assembly are deciding on his fate (440) and all of Argos is against him (445-46). Here the human world does not provide the solution we saw in *Eumenides* (discussed further below) and Apollo is seemingly negligent or unwilling to help. Furthermore, Orestes admits to 'conscience' in reply to Menelaus' question 'What's wrong with you? What sickness is killing you?' (trans. West):

ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δεῖν' εἰργασμένος. (396)

The use of ἡ σύνεσις here is often seen as highly significant; there are translation issues but it is sometimes interpreted as 'conscience'.³³ This may seem anachronistic but

³² Which, as West notes (1987 ad loc.), runs contrary to the tradition. In Aeschylus it is assumed that Agamemnon will be gratified by the killing of Clytemnestra. Apollo tells him (and no-one subsequently doubts) that Agamemnon's wrath would persecute him if he failed to avenge him (*Cho.* 271-96, cf. 925 and *Eum.* 466ff.). See also the two *Electras* especially Eur. *El.*, e.g. 677ff. and 976-78.

³³ West (1987) has 'My intellect – I am conscious of having done awful things.' Cf. Willink's 'awareness' (1986 ad loc.) and Arrowsmith's 'conscience' (1958).

probably, as Wright comments,³⁴ it does seem to represent an early stage in the development of the concept of an ethical consciousness or inner morality.

Menelaus' exchange with Orestes in the following lines shows a wide-ranging attack on Apollo for commanding murder, for its being unjust, for refusing to help those he has ordered, for delay and for not being capable of purging the guilt caused or of saving Orestes:

<i>Orestes:</i>	ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἀναφορὰ τῆς ξυμφορᾶς ...
<i>Menelaus:</i>	μὴ θάνατον εἵπηις· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ οὐ σοφόν.
<i>Or:</i>	Φοῖβος, κελεύσας μητρὸς ἐκπρᾶξαι φόνον.
<i>Men:</i>	ἀμαθέστερός γ' ὢν τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τῆς δίκης.
<i>Or:</i>	δουλεύομεν θεοῖς, ὅτι ποτ' εἰσὶν οἱ θεοί.
<i>Men:</i>	καίτ' οὐκ ἀμύνει Λοξίας τοῖς σοῖς κακοῖς;
<i>Or:</i>	μέλλει· τὸ θεῖον δ' ἔστι τοιοῦτον φύσει. (414-20)

Orestes' comments – ὅτι ποτ' εἰσὶν οἱ θεοί and μέλλει· τὸ θεῖον – express the great distance between the divine and human. The slow-moving gods have been suggested by Euripides before, by Athena at the end of *Ion* (1614), and are indeed a tragic cliché. Here, unlike in the lighter play, Apollo *will* appear at the end but with solutions very much out of step with complex human problems.

As for how the spectators would understand Menelaus' attack on Apollo (417), this characterisation of the hero was highly criticised for its lack of tragic decorum in

³⁴ Wright (2008: 56) and he notes cf. *Hel.* 1002-3 and *Philoc.* 902-3. West (1987 ad loc.) comments that 'the concept was beginning to be familiar.' See *Andr.* 802ff. and *Antiph.* 5.93. He notes, however, how Menelaus found Orestes' words obscure.

antiquity.³⁵ We have seen him unsympathetically treated before, in *Andromache*, where, it was suggested, his characterisation might be seen in terms of anti-Spartan sentiment. Here his character is more difficult to judge. His initial comments are on Orestes' appearance (385, 387, 389); he wants to be spared the explanation (393) and he does not understand what Orestes means by 'conscience' (397) (see n. 33 and 34 above). It is possible that his views are meant to lack depth;³⁶ if so, they add to the widespread condemnation of Apollo, but again with no decisive authority.

In another of the series of surprise entrances here, Tyndareus appears (470). He apparently functions to put forward the law as the course Orestes should have taken (487 and 495, 500-3, 523). His critique of the vengeance cycle (507-11), in particular, is implicitly a severe censuring of Apollo, although he does take the argument to absurd lengths.³⁷ Further to Electra's comments earlier (196), he voices the central moral dilemma of matricide (538-39). In the next section of the play we will see his alternative which will

³⁵ Arist. *Poet.* 1454a 28-9, 1461b 21 criticises Menelaus for baseness of character inappropriate to tragedy – πονηρίας μὲν ἤθους μὴ ἀναγκαΐας. The schol. and hyp. reflect these views on breaches of tragic decorum. On Menelaus' judgement of Apollo at 417 – ἀμαθέστερός γ' ὢν τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τῆς δίκης. – Hartigan (1991: 137, n. 31) notes that some ancient commentators were disturbed by it. One puts it: εἰ τοῦτο ἐκέλευσεν, ἀμαθής ἐστιν. ἢν' ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου δηλώσῃ ὅτι οὐκ ἐκέλευσεν ὁ θεός. οὐ γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ θεός ἀμαθής.

³⁶ West (1987, on 397) notes that Menelaus repeatedly judges things in terms of *sōphía* (see also 415, 417, 488, 490, 695, 716, cf. 710).

³⁷ As noted by Willink (1986 ad loc.).

end the cycle of vengeance but will hardly be a viable moral alternative (the assembly's punishment is stoning to death of which he approves, 612-15, discussed below).

Implicit criticism of Apollo is seen in the further sympathy evoked for Orestes. He had little choice but to carry out a command from Apollo:

ἐγὼ δ' ἀνόσιός εἰμι μητέρα κτανών,
ὄσιος δέ γ' ἕτερον ὄνομα τιμωρῶν πατρί. (546-47)

At 591-99 he turns to directly accusing the god:

ὄρᾱις 'Απόλλων', ὅς μεσομφάλους ἔδρας
ναίων βροτοῖσι στόμα νέμει σαφέστατον;
[ᾧ πειθόμεσθα πάνθ' ὅς' ἂν κεῖνος λέγῃ.]
τούτῳ πιθόμενος τὴν τεκούσαν ἔκτανον.
ἐκεῖνον ἡγεῖσθ' ἀνόσιον καὶ κτείνετε·
ἐκεῖνος ἤμαρτ', οὐκ ἐγώ. τί χρῆν με δρᾶν;
ἢ οὐκ ἀξιόχρεως ὁ θεὸς ἀναφέροντί μοι
μίασμα λῦσαι; ποῖ τις οὖν ἔτ' ἂν φύγοι,
εἰ μὴ ὁ κελεύσας ῥύσεταιί με μὴ θανεῖν; (591-99)

Critics have noted Orestes' inconsistency in this speech,³⁸ but the powerful Apollo described at 591-93 does evoke sympathy for Orestes' position, and his question 'What should I have done?' is a fair one. As before, the spectator is led to emotional empathy with Orestes; we can compare the Apollo/ephebe relationship in *Ion* where we see a much more reasoned questioning of the god as Ion's doubts about Apollo increase with his intellectual enlightenment. Orestes' arguments are intellectually weak,³⁹ his emotional position strong (the suffering sleeping figure, the madness).

³⁸ See Conacher (1967: 217), Roberts (1984: 113).

³⁹ There is an element of sophistic rhetorical style here. See Willink (1986, on 544-601), Hartigan (1991: 138), Wright (2008: 131).

There are no further references to Apollo until his entrance at the end of the play, except for the Messenger's comment:

...ἡὺγένεια δὲ
οὐδέν σ' ἐπωφέλησεν οὐδ' ὁ Πύθιον
τρίποδα καθίζων Φοῖβος, ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσεν. (954-56)

This passing remark by a minor character here, as the assembly have just decided on stoning, is very telling as Apollo would now appear to be Orestes' only hope. It also completes the sense of total human condemnation of Apollo. It uses the verb ἀπολλυω – destroy – the frequent use of which in *Orestes* underlines the relationship between Apollo and destruction,⁴⁰ carrying the echo of his name even when it is used of someone else. Finally, on comments by the characters, the Phrygian slave (1389) describes the walls of Troy as 'Apolline battlements' which possibly acts as a reminder of Apollo's Trojan connections and adds a further note of his ambivalence for a Greek audience – as so often in tragedy.

The cumulative effect of the direct condemnation of Apollo and the implicit criticism created through the presentation of his suffering victims is very strong. The characters' censure is never contradicted by any supporting view or choral ode of praise of the god. Their comments have been seen as an example of Euripides' discrediting Apollo.⁴¹ However, some aspects of characterisation, especially that of Orestes, act to reduce the sense of Apollo's culpability. In the intellectually and morally weak arguments Orestes uses to justify his role (544-604) we are in fact prepared for the actions he carries out in the second half (in contrast to commentators who have often found this change unconvincing),

⁴⁰ See n. 26.

⁴¹ See Roberts (2005: 145), Hartigan (1991: 137, n. 31).

when, in terms of actual action, his alternative to Apollo's guidance is murder and kidnap. At 552-58 he repeats Apollo's 'mother argument' from *Eumenides* (that matricide is less of a crime than murder of the father because the mother is not a real parent, only carries the seed of the father).⁴² This was presented as less than convincing even when spoken by Apollo and the audience would find it dubious from the mouth of Orestes. Orestes even claims that he has done a service in curbing murderous women generally (564-65). Then – μισῶν δὲ μητέρ' ἐνδίκως ἀπώλεσα – (572) reveals that his alternative to guidance by Apollo is hate-motivated murder; and, in desperate search for justification, he even blames Tyndareus for giving Clytemnestra birth (584-85). At 587-88 his reference to Telemachus in the myth of Odysseus further reveals his inability to defend himself convincingly. In the *Odyssey*, probably the myth's best known version, Orestes was presented as a blameless model for Telemachus. Here, where he clearly carries considerable blame, the reference would have the opposite effect to that intended by the character.

The questioning treatment of Apollo in the first section of the play need not be seen to represent authorial condemnation of the god nor to reflect a prevalent view; it is part of the dramatic scheme of this particular play. The typically multi-voiced Euripides is notably univocal in this first half, presenting instead two contrasting sections; the audience have been led to condemn Apollo at this point as they are about to be shown an alternative scenario without him.⁴³

⁴² See discussion on the 'mother argument' in Chapter 4, pp. 134-35.

⁴³ In contrast to Wolff (1968: 147) who simply finds Apollo forgotten as the play moved away from the traditional myth.

We can also see this reversal in terms of traditional structural patterns in tragedy. It could be seen as a *mēchanēma* plot consisting of a somewhat contrived intervention in events (compare *Helen*) or as *peripeteia* – a reversal of plot which was more subject to the rules of probability (and which was more ‘approved’ by Aristotle).⁴⁴ If *Orestes* does follow any kind of familiar structure, it is a particularly striking version of it; the audience would not have expected these particular plot turns. However, as we have seen, there is some underlying preparation for the actions of the second half, especially in the characterisation of Orestes, creating dramatic consistency and believability while retaining dramatic surprise. The use of plot here makes Euripides’ point and, as we will see, the point is a serious one.

Apollo’s absence from the text

After 599 Apollo (apart from the exceptions noted in n. 23) is not mentioned again until his entrance at the end of the play. His absence, as we have seen, is a recurring theme in tragedy; here its thematic point seems to be to point up the behaviour of humans who cannot provide a viable alternative to divine morality.⁴⁵ We immediately see how humans act in the absence of gods. A vindictive Tyndareus supports the stoning of Orestes and Electra (612-14), his idea of a legal alternative to vengeance. Menelaus refuses to help Orestes, or makes at best an uncommitted and ineffectual offer (682ff.). Then,

⁴⁴ See on contrived plots, Arist. *Poet.* 1454a33 – 1454b9. On *peripeteia* see 1452a22-29.

⁴⁵ I do not go as far as some who suggest that his long textual absence here means that Orestes was responsible for the murder of his mother all along, referring to Apollo only when it was useful to him (Conacher, 1967, Schein, 1975 and Wolff, 1968).

immediately, Pylades enters and is Orestes' last hope. The characterisation of Pylades is again expressive of the particular theme of the version of the Orestes myth in which he is seen. He seems at first to be a good friend. However, an initial indicator of the nature of this friendship is seen in Orestes' comments on friends (804-5) which is possibly ironic as we see to what this friendship leads (depending of course on how we judge their actions). It has also been noted how the use of the word *ἑταῖρία* (1072, 1079) to describe this friendship may have carried some associations for the audience which would give the friendship already an ominous tone.⁴⁶

As well as in the actions of the three characters above, another example of godless human action and decision-making is seen in the Messenger's report of proceedings at the Assembly (866ff.). Orestes' defends himself, again, on dubious grounds of gender (that murder of husbands by wives should not be sanctioned as it will lead to the domination of women). He does not mention Apollo, his best defence here. Whatever his own motivation

⁴⁶ Wright (2008: 103, and see his references) that their friendship is repeatedly described in language recalling explicitly the *hetaireiai* – political clubs of young aristocratic men of the last two decades of the 5th century. They were active in the revolution of 411-10 and responsible for intimidation in the city after democracy was restored (1072, 1079). See Thuc. 3.82, 8.54, 8.65.2. See also Thuc. 6.27-28 on the eve of the Sicilian expedition – the mutilation of the Herms and the profanation of the Mysteries which was said to have been carried out by young men. See Greenberg (1962) on the friendship of Orestes and Pylades as a perversion of *philia*. Debnar (2005: 19): Orestes, Pylades and Electra are a faction of young aristocrats. See also Hall (1993: 269-71) who relates this play closely to its context.

for this,⁴⁷ its effect is telling. In *Eumenides* Apollo's absence from the final stages of the action suggested his irrelevance as Delphic law was superseded by human democratic process. Here he is absent, in the sense of unmentioned, where humans can provide no viable alternative. The Messenger reports that Orestes spoke well (although we may not agree) but that the Assembly decide on death (944-45), again with notable differences from the trial in *Eumenides*. There the murder was cause for the establishment of a democratic trial; here this already exists. The condemnation by the humans reveals their limited understanding of Orestes' moral dilemma. This is an apparent critique of democratic process – the play clearly addresses fifth-century Athens as much as mythical Argos.⁴⁸ Orestes' position also evokes audience sympathy as the judgement is harsh and his suffering seems punishment enough. Indeed, at this stage in the action, Electra and Orestes still seem innocent or, at worst, the victims of an inevitable process in their family; the Chorus mention Orestes and Electra's cursed house here (807ff.); their lack of free choice has already been suggested in the many references to Tantalus in this play (5, 347, 350, 813, 985, 1544).⁴⁹ One of the effects of these references is to place Orestes and Electra at the end of a long accursed race, innocent in the sense of having little free choice in their

⁴⁷ In his speech of self justification (544-604), it is also notable that Orestes' reference to Apollo seems almost to occur to Orestes as an afterthought. West (1987 ad loc.) comments that the lines have even been condemned because of this when it would actually be his strongest defence.

⁴⁸ Although it is not exactly like the Athenian assembly. 'The debate seems to exemplify the worst type of behaviour that can take place in a supposedly democratic assembly.' (Wright, 2008: 106-7). Compare Thuc. 8.66 which is frequently quoted. Wright notes how the quality of the debate was worse after restoration of democracy: prominent politicians were seen as 'demagogues'. See Cleophon in Ar. *Ran.* 678 and 1532.

⁴⁹ Hartigan (1991: 129, n. 8) notes the high number of these references here in comparison with *El.*, *IT* and *IA* (4 in *IT* and 2 each in *IA* and *El.*).

actions and thus inviting further sympathy in their view of the god. However, at the same time, Electra expresses doubts (5 and 8),⁵⁰ undermining the myth which would help justify them. The Chorus mention Pelops' children again (971ff.) and Electra develops this (982ff.), adding further to the idea of them being caught up in something beyond their control.

But this is the last time the audience are led to sympathise with Orestes and Electra as the murder of Helen is now planned. It is Pylades' idea (1105), the kidnap of Hermione is Electra's (1189). Orestes' sister and friend, as substitutes for Apollo, are worse advisers, or at least no better.⁵¹ There is a marked contrast between this and Electra's reminder of the curse; this crime has nothing to do with the house of Tantalus and their family history is no justification for it.

At 1155 Orestes' comment that there is nothing better than a friend has a different ring about it now that the friends plan to murder. We also discover that it was Pylades who 'devised the nastiness for Aegisthus' (1158). The perversion of *philia* among the trio (see Greenberg, n. 46 above) is rounded off dramatically and ironically by, at 231ff., a travesty of the great *kommos* in *Choephoroi* where a range of powers was called on to aid them in

⁵⁰ Wright (2006: 39 and 2008: 27) ὥς λέγουσι does not necessarily imply scepticism but here its recurrence in three lines gives it an inescapable emphasis and the position of μὲν makes the ironical or sceptical tone explicit (see Denniston, 1950: 381).

⁵¹ In the ancient hyp. Pylades was seen as the only character who was not bad – πλὴν γὰρ Πυλάδου πάντες φαῦλου ἦσαν – although, as Wright notes (2008: 57), it is not easy to see why he was the exception.

their revenge for their father's unjust murder. Here they call on Agamemnon and Zeus in order to revenge themselves on Menelaus and to save their own lives.⁵² Orestes has immediately agreed (1106) and shows no qualms about murder which underlines that Apollo was not entirely responsible for Orestes' actions in the matricide. The murder of Helen echoes that of Clytemnestra, pointing up a moral difference which Orestes does not see:

οὐκ ἂν κάμοιμι τὰς κακὰς κτείνων αἰεὶ.
(1590, see also 1607)

This further erodes any moral justification for matricide and trivialises that murder. The text seems to show how unjust and callous these acts are – in the absence of Apollo.

Euripides is boldly effective, in terms of both surprising plot and serious theme, in his creation of a marked reversal after Apollo's exit. There is a shift in sympathy away from the trio and the question of whether the gods are not needed after all is raised, making Apollo's final entrance highly dramatic. The view to which the audience has been led from the first half has, at the least, been seriously questioned and they are left to wonder if there is any solution. For the moment they are entertained by the Phrygian slave (1369ff.) – another surprise entrance – before Apollo's epiphany.

⁵² Cf. another truncated version of the *kommos* at Eur. *El.* 611ff.

Apollo ex machina

At 1625 Apollo enters. This ending has traditionally been focused on as the most problematic feature of a problematic play, and it has provoked some highly critical views of Apollo's character.⁵³ It continues to be debated.

This examination of the speech and the rest of the scene will bring in the various questions it raises. These include the issue of genre: this ending was seen in later antiquity as more appropriate to comedy,⁵⁴ and we might ask what this meant to a fifth-century audience. Further on the speech in its performance context, the Apollo epiphany could be seen as a response to perceived demands for novelty – as the climax in a series of surprising reversals of events. It could represent a return to convention within tragedy as a conservative form – a return to myth/divine solution at the end of such a convention-challenging play. It may be seen to undermine myth by presenting an unconvincing solution.⁵⁵ We might wonder if it would have been taken as an ending of serious religious significance by any element of the audience.⁵⁶ We might also ask how thematically

⁵³ Verrall's influential ironic reading of the text centred on an Apollo who could not be believed in by Euripides nor his audience. He found the ending 'absurd, unreal, meaningless, impossible.' (1905: 257). Arrowsmith (1958: 110): 'Apollo's arrangements show a degree of stupidity rare even in a Euripidean god'.

⁵⁴ Τὸ δράμα κωμικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν καταστροφὴν (*Or. hyp.*, cf. schol. to 1691).

⁵⁵ See Zeitlin (1980: 71) who finds in this ending 'no illusion of fidelity to a coherent tradition, but just another play'.

⁵⁶ Some scholars have promoted the taking of the ending at face value, looking at it from the point of view of the contemporary audience who would take it seriously: Lefkowitz (2002: 54), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 292, 399).

important it was thought to be or whether it was seen as another version of Euripides' conventional closures.⁵⁷ There is also the question of whether and how we can relate it to the wider context. For example, it may comment on socio-political circumstances in the Athens of 408, this unconvincing Apollo suggesting an ending which is highly pessimistic in providing no viable solution to human problems.⁵⁸

I believe this epiphany worked on different levels for its fifth-century audience. This is suggested by the fact that, although we do not actually know if the play won at the Great Dionysia, there is evidence that it was very popular in antiquity.⁵⁹

Apollo's stage entrance, on one level, provides plot novelty, another surprise entrance after those of Helen, Tyndareus and the Phrygian slave.⁶⁰ The audience may have been even more surprised to see Apollo appear in a play by Euripides. Wright points out that Euripides was particularly fond of epiphany endings, citing *Andromache*, *Bacchae*,

⁵⁷ Some commentators find the ending less of a problem. See Greenberg (1962: 189), Wright (2006: 45), Mastronarde (2002: 29-30).

⁵⁸ Views of the play as a response to social disintegration are seen in Rheinhardt (1960) and Wolff (1968), Apollo's ending showing that traditional myths have lost their relevance for the later 5th century.

⁵⁹ The ancient hyp. states that it was one of the most successful plays on the stage, has a plot which occurs in no other and has a conclusion more 'of the comic type.' Hall (2007: 275) notes that it was perhaps the most talked about theatrical event of the time. Wright (2008: 15) sees its popularity revealed by the number of comic parodies of the play including *Ar. Ran.* 303-4.

⁶⁰ Some scholars have concentrated on the theatrical effectiveness of the ending rather than its intellectual or thematic content as its main aspect: Lesky (1935) and Webster (1967).

Electra, *Hippolytus*, *Suppliants*, *IT*, *Helen* and *Ion*.⁶¹ However, I would note that none of these is Apollo and that in three he is expressly replaced by other deities (*IT*, *Ion*, *Electra*). In *Orestes* Apollo is absent from the text in the middle but appears on stage at the end, an alternative to Euripides' own convention whereby Apollo is usually represented by intermediaries. Roberts found the audience would expect this ending because it is characteristic of oracles to be surprising and yet somehow expected.⁶² I believe this play has led the audience to expect otherwise, especially in the light of other recent Euripidean tragedies. It plays with audience knowledge and expectations,⁶³ and increased effect is created by its suddenness, at a moment of chaos building to a climax, and with the added element that Apollo has Helen with him. It may to us seem melodramatic, which is possibly what was meant by calling it comic. To the fifth-century audience it was still tragedy of course; it may have been perceived as more comic than most but other tragedies have 'happy' endings.⁶⁴

We have seen in comparisons, particularly with the *Oresteia*, throughout the examination of the text of *Orestes* that intertextuality and theatrical allusion are important aspects.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Wright (2008: 49).

⁶² Roberts (1984: 117, citing Wolff, 1968).

⁶³ See Revermann above in Introduction, n. 34.

⁶⁴ See Taplin (1990: 196) on tragedy's 'open, disturbing, unsettled [endings]', Thornburn (2001: 221) on Euripidean endings, Roberts (2005, 136-48) on the variety of tragic endings, Mastronarde (2005: 329) on 'saving' gods and endings, Swift's chapter (2008: 86-100) on 'happy' endings. See Wright (2005: 36ff.) on tragic/comic endings.

⁶⁵ *Or.* has been seen to engage with the *Oresteia* particularly but with many other works too. See Wright (2008: 81).

Audiences would experience the plays on different levels. Many of the spectators must have enjoyed and found enhanced meaning in the recognition of allusions. Indeed, Zeitlin finds that familiarity with other texts is imperative for genuine appreciation of its meaning and achievement.⁶⁶ Its popularity and the plot novelty described above show that it must also have worked for those who were less aware of these.⁶⁷ A stage entrance by Apollo must have been dramatically powerful, and we must also consider that it would be a religiously powerful ending for some spectators. Such aspects would have been more evident in performance and we do not know exactly how it was presented.⁶⁸

To examine the actual content of the speech, some elements must have been seen as humour, albeit bitterly ironic, but unlike some commentators (see Greenberg, n. 57) I also find its details thematically important and serious. At the opening Apollo announces himself and defuses human emotions:

Μενέλαε, παῦσαι λῆμ' ἔχων τεθηγμένον·
Φοῖβός σ' ὁ Λητοῦς παῖς ὃδ' ἐγγὺς ὦν καλῶ. (1625-26)

He proceeds to offer solutions at odds with human experience and the complexity of the play's events. We have seen this prefigured by Orestes' lack of understanding of Apollo (418-20). On one level these solutions seem deliberately bizarre, if very dark. Helen is to be a star for sailors (1637), surely deeply ironic after so many of them were lost at Troy

⁶⁶ See Introduction, n. 35.

⁶⁷ Insofar as the play is an adaptation of both a myth and of earlier versions, we can note Hutcheon: 'For an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences.' (2006: 121).

⁶⁸ West (1987, on 1625) describes it as a spectacular tableau on four levels, unique in ancient drama, with perhaps forty persons on stage.

because of her. Wright notes that the association of Helen and the Dioscuri has troubled some commentators; there is no other evidence that she received cult worship with them. ‘Perhaps the aetiology is a fabrication (in which case, presumably, its effect would be to undermine our faith in Apollo’s final words)’.⁶⁹ Menelaus is to remarry (1638) which again seems ironic after the whole Trojan War has been fought over his retrieval of his wife.⁷⁰ Particularly bizarre is that Orestes, currently holding a knife to her throat, is to marry Hermione (1653). Menelaus afterwards betroths her to Orestes (1675) which is a common element in the endings of New Comedy.⁷¹

This speech offers another version of Apollo’s traditional distance. As an alternative to plays where the god has actually been meaningfully absent from the stage (*Eumenides*, *IT*, *Electra*, *Andromache* and *Ion*), absences which all suggested a certain ineffectiveness or lack of concern, here Euripides makes a similar ‘negative’ point but through Apollo’s presence; the return to traditional epiphany in fact expresses deeper doubts as gods are unable to offer real solutions to human social and moral problems. So this ‘plays’ with audience expectations of the Apollo of literature, and especially of Euripides’ own plays, as part of a serious theme as well as being a surprise ending.

⁶⁹ Wright (2008: 70-71). Willink (1986, on 1635-37) notes that Helen did in fact share a cult with the Dioscuri (first attested in Pind. *Ol.* 3.1-2); cf. *Hel.* 1666-69 apparently alluding to the Athenian festival of the Ἀνέκεια. But we know of no *marine* Helen cult, although that of the Dioscuri is well-known.

⁷⁰ West (1987, on 1638) comments that there is no tradition that he did re-marry. However, I would note that Homer’s report that he had a son by a slave woman (*Od.* 4.10-14) is an idea that Euripides may have exploited.

⁷¹ West (1987, on 1675).

The distance between gods and humans generally is also seen in the following lines on Helen and the Trojan War. Apollo says:

ἐπει θεοὶ τῶι τῆσδε καλλιστεύματι
Ἑλληνας εἰς ἓν καὶ Φρύγας συνήγαγον
θανάτους τ' ἔθηκαν, ὥς ἀπαντλοῖεν χθονὸς
ὑβρισμα θνητῶν ἀφθόνου πληρώματος. (1639-42)

The purpose of the war was to make the earth less populated, which Wright finds 'breathtakingly cruel.'⁷² Cruelty implies deliberate intent to cause suffering, and I find that it rather suggests gods who exist in another dimension and for whom a human war is on an inconsequential scale. It perhaps suggests contemporary comment on the similarly 'useless' Peloponnesian War, the possibility of which was also discussed in the chapter on the Trojan War plays.

There may also be some beneficial aspect to Apollo asserted here and suggesting an alternative to the characters' condemnation. At 1634 authority is given to Apollo's announcements by the fact that he is commanded by Zeus. He has also saved Helen from being killed.⁷³ And he *does* send Orestes to trial (1650) where he will be found innocent (1652). This will be a trial on the Areopagus, as in *Eumenides*, but made up of gods, suggesting that the humans at the Argos assembly were unable to deal with this case (note the displacement to Argos while clearly an Athenian assembly is being commented on). Apollo will reconcile Argos to Orestes (1664-65) and take the blame. It is confirmed by Apollo himself that he *did* command the matricide (compare *Electra* where it is left

⁷² Wright (2008: 70). He notes cf. *Hel.* 38-41 (2008: 99). This idea also opens the *Cypria* (fr. 1 West, 2003).

⁷³ I find this rather more positive than West (1987 on 1633) who comments that Apollo being the saviour of Helen is merely for 'dramatic economy'.

vague). West finds this ‘succinct promise’ of Apollo to ‘set things right’ disposes of a major unresolved problem,⁷⁴ but I find that it leaves questions unanswered. At this stage it hardly represents a shift of moral responsibility onto Apollo and is in fact a very telling irony as we have seen what Orestes is capable of without him. Apollo’s word is still challenged here; in Orestes’ last comment he hails the god as true prophet but then adds doubts:

ὦ Λοξία μαντεῖε, σῶν θεσπισμάτων
οὐ ψευδόμαντις ἦσθ’ ἄρ’ ἀλλ’ ἐτήτυμος.
καίτοι μ’ ἐσήκει δαῖμα, μή τινος κλύων
ἀλαστόρων δόξαιμι σὴν κλύειν ὅπα. (1666-69)

This suggests, again, Orestes’ fevered imagination but it also represents a strong challenge to the authority and veracity of Apollo’s word. We see also, again, how Euripides draws on some of the likely concerns of his audience by using Orestes to play on fears of an oracle manipulated by intermediaries (Delphic priests, Athenian *chresmologoi*).⁷⁵

There remains the question of how we can relate the Apollo of *Orestes* to the Athenian socio-political context of 408. *Orestes* has often been seen as a response to social conditions and political events. The human chaos before Apollo’s entrance can easily be taken as a vision of late fifth-century Athens – the later stages of the Peloponnesian War, the aftermath of the Sicilian expedition and a city ridden with political factions and oligarchic revolutions from 411 onwards.⁷⁶ We can see attitudes to the Peloponnesian War

⁷⁴ West (1987, on 1665).

⁷⁵ On Aristophanes and *chresmologoi* see Chapter 5, p. 161.

⁷⁶ See on the period after the Sicilian expedition Thuc. 7.72-87; on this and the Constitution of the 400 see Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*], 29-33 especially 29.1. For its replacement by the Constitution of the 5000 several months

in the inglorious depiction of the Trojan War. The activities at the Assembly (866-956) suggest comment on Athenian factions and even specific personalities.⁷⁷

I would agree with Wright that the play has political content, but that it very probably does not have a political *purpose* (Wright's italic) or didactic message.⁷⁸ As in the Trojan War plays, Euripides can be seen to engage with some contemporary views rather than to attack his society. In terms of the use of Apollo here, the play is not related to specific events but rather makes him the focus for the expression of pervasive feelings – growing religious scepticism and rational questioning. In the 'real' middle section Apollo was absent. His stage presence falls within the context of an ending where myth is clearly challenged.⁷⁹ Apollo sends Orestes to trial which restores Aeschylus' version of the myth. This acknowledges Aeschylus' cultural influence but challenges his version; recontextualised to the late fifth century it offers no real solutions – nothing of relevance to the human world of the play or to the real world of 408. It seems that the role and relevance of gods is questioned by the way in which Apollo is juxtaposed with the more realistic human world of the middle section. If there is disillusionment with Athenian political ideologies and systems, the audience are led by the structure of the play to find that Apollo's mythical solutions provide no real moral answers either and no sense that divine justice is relevant.

later see Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 33.1 and Thuc. 8.97. For restoration of democracy in 410 until the rule of the 30 in 404 see Thuc. 8.98. See Wright who questions modern 'doom-laden' views of this era (2008: 75-76).

⁷⁷ See Thuc. 8.66. See Hall (1993) on specific references in *Or.* to events and people.

⁷⁸ Wright (2008: 97).

⁷⁹ Wright (2008: 128) notes particularly its engagement with ideas found in Gorgias: the doubting of sense perceptions and ability to communicate them. Euripides explores the idea that myths are just another species of illusion.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed a vision of oracular Apollo in the *Orestes* of 408 very different from that in the *Oresteia* of fifty years earlier. The *Oresteia* was in one sense an expression of (qualified) support for democratic process, in an era of Athenian self-confidence, where the qualities of Apollo were rejected as anachronistic in favour of the democratic principles represented by Athena. Here, in the only extant play where Apollo actually appears on stage to have the final word, it is to express a lack of confidence in divine solutions, but in a play where his absence has revealed that there are no viable human alternatives.

However, the fact that we have a number of examples of Apollo in Euripidean plays is important here. It reveals, not a chronological progressive relationship with the context, but shifts from one play to another. Euripides' *Electra* was actually produced around the same time as, and possibly earlier than, *IT* and *Ion* with their lighter versions of the god.

This variety in Apollo's Euripidean roles does not suggest a playwright who was notably critical of the god, but one with a particular interest in the literary history and Athenian cult status of Apollo, and who works with these in engaging with aspects of his contemporary world.

CLOSING REMARKS

This examination of the presentation of tragic Apollo, which has been both broad and detailed, has reached some conclusions about how the god is characterised, how text and contexts come together in the experience of the fifth-century audience, and how and why his tragic presentation changes through the fifth century.

Close study of the texts has revealed a pervasive kind of ambivalence in tragic presentations of Apollo: he is authoritative as the god of the 'truth-giving' oracle and as the divine mentor of ephebes, but his morality and effectiveness are consistently questioned. The issue of tragedy as a genre has been found to be important here. The 'negative' aspects of the god's tragic personae, although striking, would be less unexpected for a fifth-century audience than they have been for some modern commentators. His tragic portrayal is generated by a genre, and within a cultural context, where questioning is expected and where Athenians seemed to be prepared to face up to their fears. We have also seen that the tragic Apollo figure builds on aspects of the god from other literature and cult, in both of which he is complex, and which would have been familiar to the audience of the plays.

We should not over-generalise about tragic Apollo from our limited surviving evidence but it has been possible to make some new observations about the god's roles in extant tragedy. We have seen, notably, how the Homeric god continues to resonate with audiences of the later fifth century as tragedians deploy this persona of Apollo in engagement with contemporary themes. We have also seen conceptually and thematically significant treatment of his other cult roles. Detailed examination of texts and research into cult aspects

has shown how the god's epithets (such as *Lykeios* and *Aguius*) are not just names; tragedians exploit their suggestiveness within their dramatic schemes. We have also seen the importance of brief references to cult sites and functions. Moving beyond the texts here to examine the religious and cultural functions of aspects such as the Acropolis caves has uncovered important lines of thought in the plays.

Study of the god throughout the fifth century has revealed significant changes in tragic Apollo. A wide range of contributory contextual factors has been found to be involved in shifts and developments in his tragic presentation. Examination of Apollo across extant plays has enabled new observations to be made about the dramatic treatment of the god by successive tragedians.

The main observation has been the striking divergence in the techniques used in the creation of the Apollo figures and in his conceptual and thematic deployment. To expand, Aeschylus characteristically creates his Apollo by drawing on aspects of the god in epic and in Athenian cult and associates his god with dark forces. His dramatic scheme makes these problematic for an Athenian audience as he deploys them within contemporary themes, particularly in his marginalisation of Apolline justice in favour of Athenian alternatives.

In Sophocles the changes in tragic Apollo since Aeschylus reveal the importance of the changed context as well as the distinctive approach of a new playwright. Sophocles echoes Aeschylus' use of association of Apollo with dark forces – the tradition of dark oracles and the epithet *Lykeios* – but in striking new ways as he deploys the god within themes of intellectual exploration. If Sophocles' themes are new, some of his techniques are more

redolent of Aeschylus than Euripides. Apollo is still one of Sophocles' enigmatic gods, but he is, perhaps surprisingly, characterised more specifically than the Apollo of Euripides.

Euripides' typically discursive, polarised, virtuosic presentation and engagement with rationalist scepticism are also characteristic of his use of Apollo. The god is revealed as a highly flexible dramatic construct, although it is recognised that this observation is due largely to the greater number of extant Euripidean plays. Euripides presents many sides to the god within varied themes and in different types of play, with his use of Apollo in some plays appearing to develop from previous versions (*IT* to *Ion*).

We could observe that whereas, in Aeschylus and Sophocles, the 'negative' side of Apollo is created by the use of 'old' aspects (the dark oracle, *Lykeios*), in Euripides it is in the use of new. Euripides does not characteristically use association with dark forces but creates his god through the experiences of characters who voice the new scepticisms of late fifth-century Athenian society.

The evidence of extant plays challenges any view of Euripides as a playwright who is particularly critical of Apollo. Rather, in his use of the god we have seen complex intertextual relationships. Euripides more than other playwrights presents the Apollo of different registers. The epic god is treated questioningly within his themes of war, the god of hymn and *paian* adds a positive note in the lighter plays. Euripides controls and manipulates the god of other genres. In this and in his use of different forms of expression – emotional suffering, intellectual questioning – Euripides reflects the many different ways in which gods are experienced in his society.

It has been shown that, in relation to other gods, Apollo has a particularly high potential for tragic treatment and is notably ambivalent for the Athenian spectators of tragedy. However, this approach to the study of Apollo in tragedy could also be applied to other gods. Detailed examination of gods within the tragic texts, against the background of their unique cultic functions, and their roles and associations in myth and literature would, as it has with Apollo, add to our understanding of themes in the plays in which they appear and how these were experienced by fifth-century spectators.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> (1970-) 2 nd ed. 14 vols, Cambridge.
<i>DK</i>	Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (1952) <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 6 th ed., Berlin.
<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby, F. (1923-58) <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Berlin.
<i>IEG</i>	West, M.L. (1989-92) <i>Iambi et Elegi Graeci</i> , 2 nd ed., 2 vols, Oxford.
<i>LFrgE</i>	Snell, B. (1979-) <i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> , Gottingen.
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (1981-) Basel.
Lobel-Page	Lobel, E. and Page, D. (1963) <i>Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta</i> , Oxford.
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, H.G. and Scott, R. (1996), <i>Greek English Lexicon</i> , 9 th ed. rev. H. Stuart Jones, Oxford.
<i>MW</i>	Merkelbach, R. and West, M.L. (1967) <i>Fragmenta Hesiodica</i> , Oxford.
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (1996) 3 rd ed.
<i>OCT</i>	Oxford Classical Texts.
<i>PMG</i>	Page, D.L. (1962) <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> , Oxford.
<i>P&W</i>	Parke, H.W. and Wormell, D.E.W. (1956) <i>The Delphic Oracle</i> , 2 vols, Oxford.
<i>SM</i>	Snell, B. and Maehler, H. (1987-88) <i>Pindari carmina cum fragmentis</i> , 2 vols, Leipzig.
<i>TrGF</i>	Snell, B., Kannicht, R. and Radt, S. (1971-85) <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , 4 vols, Göttingen.
West	West, M.L. (1994) <i>Greek Lyric Poetry: the Poems and Fragments of the Greek Iambic, Elegiac, and Melic Poets (excluding Pindar and Bacchylides) down to 450 BC</i> , Oxford.

All other abbreviations are as in *OCD*.

TEXTS, COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS USED

AESCHYLUS

Texts of the surviving plays:

Page, D. (1972) Oxford.

Fragments:

TrGF

Sommerstein, A. H. (2008) Cambridge, MA and London.

Commentaries:

Oresteia:

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1970) Englewood Cliffs.

Hogan, J.C. (1984) Chicago and London.

Conacher, D.J. (1987), Toronto, Buffalo and London.

Collard, C. (2002) Oxford.

Agamemnon:

Verrall, A.W. (1904) London.

Fraenkel, E. (1950) 3 vols, Oxford.

Denniston, J.D. and Page, D. (1957) Oxford.

Choephoroi:

Tucker, T.G. (1901) Cambridge.

Thomson, G. (1938) 2 vols, Cambridge.

Eumenides: Rose, H.J. (1957-8) 2 vols, Amsterdam.
 Garvie, A.F. (1986) Oxford.
 Bowen, A. (1986) Bristol.
 Sommerstein, A. (1989) Cambridge.
 Podlecki, A.J. (1992) Warminster.

Translations:

Oresteia: Meineck, P. (1998) Indianapolis and Cambridge.
 Sommerstein, A.H. (2008) Cambridge, MA and London.

All seven plays: Grene, D. and Lattimore, R. (1953-91) Chicago.

SOPHOCLES

Texts of the surviving plays:

Lloyd-Jones, H. and Wilson, N.G. (1990) Oxford.

Fragments:

TrGF

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1996, reprd 2003) Cambridge, MA and London.

Commentaries:

Oedipus Tyrannus and *Electra*:

Hogan, J.C. (1991) Carbondale and Edwardsville.

Oedipus Tyrannus:

Jebb, R.C. (1885) Cambridge.

Sheppard, J.T. (1920) Cambridge.

Kamerbeek, J.C. (1967) Leiden.

Dawe, R.D. (1982) Cambridge.

Electra:

Jebb, R.C. (1894) Cambridge.

Kells, J.H. (1973) Cambridge.

March, J.R. (2001) Warminster.

Finglass, P.J. (2007) Cambridge.

Translations:

Oedipus Tyrannus and *Electra*:

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1994, reprd 2001) Cambridge, MA and London.

All seven plays : Grene, D. and Lattimore, R. (1942-91) Chicago.

EURIPIDES

Texts of the surviving plays:

Diggle, J. (1981) Oxford.

Fragments:

TrGF

Collard, C. and Cropp, M.J. (2008) 2 vols, Cambridge, MA and London.

Commentaries:

- Alcestis*: Dale, A. M. (1954) Oxford.
 Conacher, D.J. (1988) Warminster.
 Parker, L.P.E. (2007) Oxford.
- IT*: Platnauer, M. (1938) Oxford.
 Cropp, M.J. (2000) Warminster.
- Ion*: Owen, A.S. (1939) Oxford, reprd (1987) Bristol.
 Lee, K.H. (1997) Warminster.
- Trojan Women, Andromache and Hecuba*:
 Morwood, J. (2008) Oxford.
- Trojan Women*: Barlow, S. (1986) Warminster.
- Andromache*: Stevens, P.T. (1971) Oxford.
 Lloyd, M. (1995) Warminster.
- Hecuba*: Collard, C. (1991) Warminster.
- Electra*: Ferguson, J. (1987, reprinted 2001) London.
 Cropp, M.J. (1988) Warminster.
- Orestes*: Willink, C.W. (1986) Oxford.
 West, M.L. (1987) Warminster.

Translations:

- Electra*: Vellacott, P. (1963) Harmondsworth.

- All nineteen plays: Grene, D. and Lattimore, R. (1942-59) Chicago.

ARISTOPHANES**Texts of the surviving plays:**

- All eleven plays: Henderson, J. (1998-2007) Cambridge, MA and London.

- Translations:** Henderson, J. (1996) *Three Plays by Aristophanes*, NY and London.

HOMER**Texts:**

- The Iliad*: Murray, A.T. (2003, 2nd ed.) rev. W. F. Wyatt, 2 vols, Cambridge, MA and London.
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Commentaries:

- Janko, R. (1992) *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 4, Bks 13-16, General ed. Kirk, G.S., Cambridge.
 Kirk, G.S. (1985-93) General ed., *The Iliad: a Commentary*, 6 vols, Cambridge.

HESIOD, HOMERIC HYMNS, EPIC CYCLE

Texts and fragments:

- Hesiod: Most, G.W. (2007) Cambridge, MA and London.
MW
Homeric Hymns: West, M.L. (2003) Cambridge, MA and London.
Epic Cycle: West, M.L. (2003) Cambridge, MA and London.

Commentaries:

- Homeric Hymns*: Richardson, N. (2010) Cambridge.

LYRIC

- Texts: PMG, SM.

- Commentaries: Finglass, P.J. (2007) *Pindar: Pythian Eleven*, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries, 45, Cambridge.

Translations:

- West
Rutherford, I. (2001) *Pindar's Paeans: a Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre*, Oxford.

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Thucydides: Stuart-Jones, H. and Powell, J.E. (1963) *Historiae*, 2 vols., Oxford.

Translations:

- Herodotus: Selincourt, A. de (1954, reprd 1972) revd by J. Marincola, Harmondsworth.
Thucydides: Warner, R. (1972 2nd ed.) Harmondsworth.
Pausanias: Levi, P. (1971) 2 vols, London.

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- Arnott, P.D. (1962) *Greek Scenic Conventions in the 5th Century BC*, Oxford.

- Athanassaki, L., Martin, R.P. and Miller, J.F. (2009) eds, *Apolline Politics and Poetics*, Athens.
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- Beekes, R.S.P. (2003) 'The origin of Apollo', *Journal Of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 3, 1-21.
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